THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF AGGRESSION IN SETTINGS SERVING EMOTIONALLY HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

BY

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

1983

For Rosemary and Bud

When I no longer watched my parents through the eyes of a child, I found the individuals whose wisdom, patience, and love helped me become myself.

Thank you, Mom and Dad

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I regard myself as a teacher who enjoys the role of student. The reciprocity of these roles and the priceless gifts given by many individuals as I developed have enriched my totality in addition to expanding my knowledge. I wish to pay tribute to some of those people and to the many others who provided traction in my efforts to elevate myself and my skills.

First, thanks go to the members of my committee. Peggy Fong and Cathy Morsink, your interest in my future and desire to help me succeed as a professional woman have not only helped me become more competent but also more complete. Stuart Schwartz and Rex Schmid, each of you combined wit with sincere professional interest and made a profound impact. Stu, you deftly taught me to be a doctoral student in sixteen grueling weeks. Rex, your valuable editorial comments become secondary only to the lesson of humility and courage in personal adversity you taught. Robert Francis Algozzine, my chair, it was your ability to see clearly what needs to be done in a task that first attracted me to you. Your humor, optimistic perseverance, genuine interest, and unsurpassed professional demeanor have kept me at this task and will ever be a model towards which I strive. Bob, your friendship and encouragement will

always be appreciated and I consider myself priviledged to have your tutelage.

My gratitude goes also to Cecil Mercer and Leila Cantara. Cecil, your interest and helpfulness extended beyond the bounds of a faculty member, demonstrating a professional ideal of unselfish contributions to a non-advisee. Thank you. Leila, your undying belief in the student as a consumer is refreshing and forward thinking and has helped me maintain a self-image as a worthy person and professional and not "just a doc student" as some would have it. I gained much from your insight and your skills.

Dennis Higgins and Dee Dee Wells must be given grateful recognition. Their generous assistance has given new dimension to the phrase "without whose assistance this would never have been possible."

Support and guidance has not been limited to those acting in a professional capacity. I will always cherish the friendship, encouragement and camaraderie of all my fellow docs; especially Rosa Boone, Reid Linn, Alice Tesch, and Bee Crews. I hope someday very soon to return all your favors. Kate Algozzine, you deserve special mention on two levels, first as a good female friend and for unselfishly sharing Bob's at-home-time with me in order that I complete this task.

Over a decade ago, two exceptional ladies, Jane Towery and Elaine Kasian, had both the foresight to help me discover my interest in special education and the ability to teach me classroom survival skills. They started me on the path which leads to today. What I took from these fine teachers, I will pass on to others.

Mom, Dad, Rick, and Bertie, bless you for believing in me--for always being there when I need you, for your letters of encouragement and numerous acts of kindness, big and small. If, as Kahlil Gibran says "Children are living arrows launched by their [families]," I truly thank you for being well-tempered and finely tuned. I could request nor receive no greater gift than those infinite colors woven into my soul through living surrounded by essential goodness and dignity.

With this last list, I must include my sister, Sheryl VanDyne. Your skill and wisdom in matters of the pen have been highly valued but your love and kindness are the most treasured. Thank you is too small, but you will understand what I mean. You always have.

I am indebted to Lois Hirai, my friend of long standing, who elected to undertake this long trek to Florida with me. May your journey home be happy and peaceful.

My daughter, Hilary, who through this entire venture, has exemplified the meaning of her name, "cheerful friend"--you will never know how I envy and cherish your forgiving nature. You have suffered my erratic moods and sporatic attention with an uncommon understanding and grace. To you go my apologies and my love.

Finally, the support, sacrifices, professional perspective and love of my husband Charlie have truly made my efforts these past two years possible. Thank you for your understanding, your patience and for growing alongside me. Now it is your turn. Punch a hole in the sky.

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF AGGRESSION IN SETTINGS SERVING EMOTIONALLY HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

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December, 1983

Chairman: Robert F. Algozzine
Major Department: Special Education

To determine teachers' perceptions of the type and extent of aggression in settings where emotionally handicapped (EH) students are served, degree and nature of teacher training in coping with aggression, and strategies utilized in dealing with aggressive students, a four-page questionnaire was disseminated to 311 Florida public school, special education teachers of EH students. Fifty-seven percent (178) of these teachers responded. Additionally 75 of these same teachers voluntarily maintained in-classroom frequency counts of five categories of aggressive incidents over a five-day school week. Results of data obtained through the questionnaire and observation indicate that the majority of teachers in the study have previously experienced and continue to encounter incidents of student aggression. Agreement was found to exist between teachers' perceived

and observed rates of extreme physical aggression toward others and verbal aggression. However, notable discrepancies were obvious between teachers' perceptions of rates of mild physical aggression toward others and aggression toward objects and rates obtained through direct observation. A majority of teachers responding to the questionnaire indicated they were confident in their ability to deal with aggressive student actions and a significant ($p < .05$) relationship was found to exist between level of confidence and prior training in specific methods to deal with student aggression. A wide variety of strategies for preventing and intervening in aggressive outbursts are utilized by these teachers; however, frequent use of classroom rules, token systems, and timeout was indicated. Regardless of the confidence expressed by these teachers, prior training experiences, and seemingly exhaustive range of interventions, 86 percent of the teachers responding to the questionnaire indicated a desire for additional training in techniques of coping with classroom aggression. Ninety-nine percept supported the need for training all teachers of EH students in such methods. Student verbal and physical aggression manifest in a variety of ways are common phenomena in settings where EH students are served and an obvious need for systematic, thorough teacher training in techniques of coping with classroom aggression is indicated. Positive action in this area by teacher training institutions appears warranted.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Aggression in children is a widely recognized part of growing up. Children spend a significant amount of their developmental years in educational settings and educators have always been concerned with ways of controlling classroom aggression; managing discipline problems is a crucial teacher concern. However, over the past several decades it has become obvious that concern has become dismay (Bayh, 1975; Walker & Holland, 1979). Evidence of alarm among professional educators, the public, students, and government officials regarding the commonplace occurrence of disruptive and violent behavior in public schools is readily available. Substantial figures on the incidence of assaultive, destructive actions have been compiled and published (Bayh, 1975; National Institute of Education, 1977) and discussion of causes, solutions, and ramifications abound. The figures, arguments, and solutions currently available however do not provide a total picture; in fact, descriptive information relative to the frequency of occurrence and type of aggression in special education settings is not available.

Alarm over incidence of violence in public schools has many foundations. In addition to practical considerations of the

financial cost associated with school violence, concern over the excessive display of aggression in schools is valid from a perspective of its impact on individuals. The effect of violence in schools on student learning and teacher stress has been addressed by a few interested parties (Bell & Semmel, 1978; Bloch, 1977). Teacher educators must also be concerned with the situation so they may better prepare teachers, counselors, aides, and other personnel to cope effectively, both physically and emotionally, with violent disruptions.

Evidence of the American public's concern with school discipline may be drawn from a study of the annual "Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools" first conducted in 1969. In each of the Gallup Polls conducted, except one, "lack of discipline" has ranked as the major dilemma confronting the public schools. The consistency of this ranking must be taken as one indicator of the perceived seriousness of the problem; however, violence in the schools did not emerge suddenly in the late sixties. As early as 1956, the National Education Association (NEA) released research findings indicating that violence in schools was a growing phenomenon (National Education Association, 1956). Four years later, confirmation of the worst fears in the NEA report was evident with open confrontation of the problem in "Student Violence and Rebellion--How Big a Problem?" (National Education Association, 1960). The proposition that violence and aggression in schools had reached critical magnitude was enunciated by Stinchcombe in 1964 through

publication of his work, Rebellion in a High School. Throughout the remaining years of the 1960's, school related aggression continued to escalate and in the early seventies was recognized as a concern significant enough to warrant Congressional investigation.

Several years of federally supported research on aggression in American public schools produced useful answers to many questions. Drawing predominantly upon school and public records and surveys of school principals, a clear description of crime and violence in the schools has been compiled. For students and teachers affiliated with public schools, data are available on the frequency, seriousness, and incidence of crime in elementary and secondary schools of the United States. The per pupil average incidence of violent crime has been delineated by level of school (elementary, junior, and senior high), region of the country and community size (urban, suburban, rural) (Bayh, 1975; National Institute of Education, 1977). Factors highly correlated with violence in the schools and the variety of means used to prevent crime also have been identified (National Institute of Education, 1977). In spite of the seemingly comprehensive picture currently available, important data are missing. Most research has dealt with crime; few studies of non-criminal aggression and violence in schools have been completed. Data that are reported deal solely with serious crimes and incidents (Bell & Semmel, 1978), not with the daily problems of disobedience and disruptive, aggressive behavior confronting classroom teachers. No data are available relative to the frequency and occurrence of aggression in special education classrooms. Furthermore, data that

are available relative to classroom violence are based more on teacher opinion than on observation techniques. In short, clear representation of the nature and extent of daily aggression in special education classrooms is currently not available.

Purpose

Violent crime in schools has been studied; however, the frequency, seriousness, and impact of aggression in special education classrooms has not. The purpose of this study was to illustrate the nature, extent, and impact of aggression in public school, special education settings for emotionally handicapped (EH) students within the state of Florida and to do so through a combination of survey and in-classroom frequency counts used with special education teachers.

Rationale

In most classes, the regular classroom teacher can anticipate having at least one highly volatile, destructive or aggressive student (Kauffman, 1981). If one considers that a conduct disorder is most likely to be labeled deviant and result in the student's referral for exceptional education services, it may be anticipated that the teacher of disordered children is confronted with substantial amounts of aggression. However the lack of data defining the prevalence and nature of aggression in special education in general

and classes for the emotionally handicapped in particular prevents useful action in this area.

Illustrative data peculiar to public school settings for the emotionally handicapped and/or behavior disordered student may prove useful at preservice and inservice levels of special education teacher training, in planning service delivery models and in determining interventions. For example, in North Carolina, a class action suit (Willie M. vs. Hunt et al., 1979) was filed on behalf of four named plaintiffs and all other violent assaultive children. As a result of the suit, 986 youth under the age of 18 were identified and certified as members of the Willie M. class as of November 15, 1982 (Carroll, 1982). Of the 986 students, 460 were receiving educational services provided by public schools. Obviously, teachers of these identified violent, assaultive children are not immune to aggressive behaviors exhibited by their students. How frequently are teachers confronted with aggressive actions from their students? What is the impact? How are these actions being handled? Past and present preservice teacher training programs have not been concerned with training educators to react effectively to aggression once it presents itself (Bell & Semmel, 1978); the extent to which the North Carolina teachers or peers in other locations have been adequately prepared to cope with the aggression manifest in their classrooms will determine the overall effect of statewide litigation.

The impact of aggressive behavior in the classroom has been addressed by Bloch (1977) and by Deaver (1976). Effects are

pervasive well beyond any observable physical damage. Recognition of aggression's impact is not limited to educators and mental health professionals. The 1982 Gallup Poll revealed that public opinion not only held lack of discipline as the primary problem confronting public schools but also considered it a major reason for teacher attrition. Sixty-three percent of the 1982 Gallup Poll sample placed discipline problems first on the list of factors contributing to teacher burnout, exceeding such other factors as low teacher salaries and ambivalent students. Specific to the area of EH teachers, Grosenick and Huntze (1980) found that the attrition rate for this group is the highest of any of the rates for classroom teachers across all areas and grade levels. If the public is correct, and the previously stated assumption of the increased rate of aggression in classrooms for the emotionally handicapped is valid, a possible explanation for the burnout rate for teachers of EH students may be found.

Questions

The most common method of data collection in studies of classroom violence has been the use of questionnaires soliciting professionals' opinions about aggression in schools. This method enables large-scale data collection relatively easily; however, the validity of these data is sometimes in question. Observational methods provide data on actual occurrences of classroom incidents but are difficult to implement on large samples of subjects in varied

settings. Data from both questionnaires and classroom observation were collected in this study.

In order to fulfill the stated purpose of the study and to guide the formulation of survey and observation instruments the following questions have been addressed.

1. What is the nature and extent of aggression as it occurs in settings where emotionally handicapped students are served?

2. What is the nature and extent of the teachers' previous training in methods for coping with aggression in settings where emotionally handicapped students are served?

3. What are common consequences and/or methods used to deal with aggressive behaviors exhibited in settings where emotionally handicapped students are served?

Definitions

The variety of meanings attributed to any one word or construct by individuals may lead to inadequate communication. Consequently, definition of key terms to be used in association with this study is imperative. The following definitions have been developed to insure greater consistency of interpretation by individuals connected with the study:

Setting serving emotionally handicapped students. This represents any public school operated setting in which special education students classified as emotionally handicapped or severely emotionally disturbed by their school district are served. Included are classes for

varying exceptionalities or cross-categorical classes when such is the administrative structure used for the purposes of service delivery to emotionally handicapped students of any given school district. It may also include homebound, hospital, or itinerant teacher situations.

Emotionally handicapped (EH). In this investigation, emotionally handicapped students are those students meeting the definition and eligibility requirements set forth by the Florida Department of Education for students identified as emotionally handicapped or severely emotionally disturbed (SED) (see Appendix A). It is to be understood that labels such as emotionally disturbed, behaviorally disordered, or any similar label may be thought of as being synonymous to emotionally handicapped in the context of this study.

Aggression. For the purpose of this study, aggression has been delineated into the following five categories:

1. Extreme physical aggression toward others manifested by attacking or attempting to attack another individual with sufficient force to potentially inflict serious physical harm (e.g., hitting, kicking, choking, headlock, bearhugs).

2. Physical aggression toward others manifested by attacking or attempting to attack another with sufficient force to potentially inflict pain (e.g., biting, scratching, hair-pulling, arm grabbing).

3. Physical aggression toward self manifested by self-mutilation or battering (e.g., cutting, biting, head banging, scratching).

4. Physical aggression toward inanimate objects as manifested by destruction of, or damage to, any object. This category includes unsuccessful attempts to damage or destroy any object.

5. Verbal aggression that is not accompanied by any of the other four types of aggression. This category includes the use of vocabulary defined as instigative profanity by the observer; negativism (neutral content stated in a negative, provocative tone of voice); teasing (verbiage that results in anxiety, or disruption of activity of the person who is the target of the teasing); slurring (commenting in a whining, nasal, or falsetto voice and/or poking fun at or intentionally embarrassing another); bullying (commanding another to act in a given manner immediately while threatening negative consequences for noncompliance).

Delimitations

The scope of the study has been delimited in a number of ways. First, the study has been restricted geographically to the state of Florida. Therefore caution should be exercised in extrapolating results of the study to other geographic areas. Second, only public school teachers serving emotionally handicapped students have been included; classes administered by private institutions and classes which categorically exclude EH students are not studied. Finally, the observation component of the study has been delimited to those settings in which teachers volunteered to conduct frequency counts during the specified one week period. It should also be noted that observation by outside observers was for the sole purpose of establishing inter-observer reliability and not for the purpose of deriving frequency counts to be included in the data.

Summary

The paucity of information clearly defining the prevalence and nature of aggression in special education in general and classes for the emotionally handicapped in particular has been a hinderance to constructive action in this area. The purpose of this study was to illustrate the nature and extent of aggression in public school, special education settings for EH students within the state of Florida. Included with this was inquiry into interventions commonly used to deal with aggressive behaviors in these settings and the nature and extent of previous teacher training in methods for coping with aggression. The following chapters describe the content of the current literature relevant to this study, research methodology, results, and implications.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a summary and, where appropriate, an analysis of the professional literature relevant to a study of the nature and extent of aggression in classrooms serving emotionally handicapped students. First, a descriptive summary from the literature supporting the focus on emotionally handicapped (EH) students is presented. Next, a summary of general training practices for teachers of disturbed students specific to coping with classroom aggression is offered, followed by an overview of classroom factors and interventions for coping with aggressive behaviors. Finally, the related studies of school violence are described.

Selection of the Relevant Literature

As this chapter discusses the results of several independent studies of professional literature relevant to study of aggression in classrooms serving EH students, the emphasis of each examination and specific sourses perused changes with the area of interest. Consequently, several sources and methods were used in the selection of relevant literature. Sources included a variety of professional

journals and monographs, texts, and professional index and abstracting systems such as ERIC, Current Index of Journals in Education, and the Education Index. The methodology of locating relevant literature began with a search of ERIC and the indices for articles published from 1975 (the date of the Bayh report and passage of PL 94-142) to 1983. Descriptors included aggression, violence, behavior problems, emotional disturbance, and emotionally disturbed. Following this search, a second was conducted volume by volume of professional journals for the same time period and included those commonly reporting on topics relevant to emotional disturbance in school-age children and youth. Holdings and services of the Norman Hall Library on the University of Florida campus in addition to various private references were perused. Finally a number of introductory texts in the area of emotional disturbance and behavior disorders, selected for their contemporariness (published 1980 to 1982) and representation of differing perspectives were studied. The bibliography and reference list of each article or text identified through these procedures were then examined for additional references. Several related articles and books were found, being primarily characterized by a whole or partial focus on aggressive behavior in school settings.

Pieces were included in the various sections of the review if they were relevant to the topic or point being presented. For example, the section titled "Focus on Emotionally Handicapped Students" warranted articles on history, prevalence, definition, classification, and characteristics. To determine contemporary

teacher training practices relevant to coping with aggressive students in settings serving EH, discussions of EH teacher competencies were sought. Interventions noted in journals and texts as being utilized with aggressive students were the focus of the review for the section "Coping With Aggression." Stringent standards were used in selecting studies for inclusion in the section "Related Studies on Aggressive Behavior in Schools." Reports included in this section must have met two criteria. The first was that the study provided evidence that a systematic investigation of the nature, frequency, and/or impact of aggressive behaviors of students in schools was conducted; articles limited to the expression of opinion were excluded. The second criterion was that the study utilized statistical analysis procedures to organize and report the results.

Focus on Emotionally Handicapped Students

Facts, figures, and issues may be used to illustrate the rationale for concentration on the exceptional education category of emotionally handicapped and its aliases, behavior disordered, behaviorally disturbed, and emotionally disturbed. Key points to be included are (a) a brief history of societal reaction and treatment of disturbed individuals, (b) prevalence, (c) definitions, (d) classification, and (e) aggressive characteristics commonly attributed to the EH population.

History

Mankind's recorded history includes numerous examples of human behavior perceived as deviating from the prevailing norms of a given era. Individuals engaging in these deviant behaviors have occasionally been treated with kindness such as that evident in the work of Philippe Pinel and Dorothea Dix. However, with these few exceptions up to the 20th century the more common societal reactions and consequent interventions were at best harsh (Algozzine, Schmid, & Mercer, 1981; Kauffman, 1981; Newcomer, 1980).

Prior to the mid-19th century, treatment of behavior deviations characteristically included methods ranging from coerced confessions to public whippings, castration, and burning at the stake. During the middle 1800's, however, these practices became increasingly unpopular and more humane treatment evolved. Initially limited to intervention with adults, this influence spread, over time, to the care and treatment of disturbed children (McDowell, Adamson, & Wood, 1982). Education became a valued factor in the promotion of mental health; schools were established in the asylums and institutions. Mental disorders in children became differentiated from adult disturbance and in depth study of children's disorders was evident in the late 1800's (McDowell et al., 1982).

Special public school classes were determined to be appropriate for certain emotionally disturbed children in the early 1960's (Paul & Epanchin, 1982). Children have received treatment in these public school classes and through special mental health organizations. Sometimes the two institutions have worked together. Often they have not.

Contemporary interventions within and across these settings, however, are most certainly viewed as humane compared with earlier treatments. Treatments in current practice involve such methods as lobotomies, electro-convulsive shock therapy, drugs, and talk or behavior therapies (the latter two being the more common treatment found in educational settings). The majority of these and related advances in treatment have occurred since 1900 (McDowell et al., 1982). Advances in treatment cannot be construed as cures, however; emotional handicaps and behavioral deviations remain visible in society at large and in its schools. Social trends, laws, and legislation such as PL 94-142 have contributed to the expanded placement and maintenance of disturbed children and youth in public schools. The federal government and most states provide categorical funding and programs for students called emotionally handicapped.

Prevalence

Estimates of the prevalence of students experiencing emotional problems severe enough to warrant specialized interventions vary, contingent upon where they are made. Figures ranging from .05 to 15 percent have been reported (Schultz, Hirshoren, Manton, & Henderson, 1971). The most widely used figure, 2 percent of the school-aged population, is an estimate made by the U.S. Office of Education (1979). The figure is not evenly distributed within the school-aged population however. It has been illustrated through several studies (Graubard, 1973; Peterson, 1961; Quay & Werry, 1972; Schultz, Salvia, & Feinn, 1974) that factors such as sex, age, and

socioeconomic levels contribute to variations in prevalence rates. Also, ecological issues must be considered; the question is largely whether a given behavior is disturbed or merely disturbing to those in power (Graubard, 1973; Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1982). Behavior considered to be an annoyance by one teacher is considered symptomatic of emotional disturbance by another teacher. Socially maladjusted or delinquent behavior manifest in an urban area is termed a behavior disorder in the suburbs; the levels of tolerance characteristic of a community must impact on prevalence figures. Difficulty in attaining accurate prevalence figures is also related to definitional issues.

Definition

A number and variety of definitions of emotional handicaps are available in the professional literature; no one definition of emotional disturbance has found universal acceptance. The adaptation of Bower's (1969) definition used in Public Law 94-142 is the current primary reference, at least for institutions receiving federal monies. Agencies and school districts not tied financially to the federal government are free to adopt any definition which satisfies the specific needs of the population served by the organization. A national survey of state level education departments conducted by Wells, Stoller, Schmid, and Algozzine (1980) resulted in comparison of component parts of definitions used by state education agencies. This review of the literature resulted in identification of several different definitions (see Appendix B).

Three definitions will be presented here to highlight the similarities across most current definitions. The first definition uses the terminology serious emotional disturbance (SED) and is Bower's 1969 formulation. This explication is significant in that it is the basis of the current Federal Register (1977) definition which may be found in Appendix B. Bower stressed that to be considered seriously emotionally disturbed, the child must exhibit one or more of the following characteristics to a marked extent or over a diuturnal period of time:

1. An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors . . .
2. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers . . .
3. Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal conditions . . .
4. A general, pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression . . .
5. A tendency to develop physical symptoms, pains, or fears associated with personal or school problems. (pp. 22-23)

The second definition, by Kauffman (1977), acknowledges the severity level of disturbance and implications for educational programming:

> Children with behavior disorders are those who chronically and markedly respond to their environment in socially unacceptable and/or personally unsatisfying ways but who can be taught more socially acceptable and personally gratifying behavior. Children with mild and moderate behavior disorders can be taught effectively with their normal peers (if their teachers receive appropriate consultative help) or in special resource or self-contained classes with reasonable hope of quick reintegration with their normal peers. Children with severe and profound behavior disorders require intensive and prolonged intervention and must be taught at home or in special classes, special schools, or residential institutions. (p. 23)

The third definition is that offered by Algozzine, Schmid, and Conners (1978). This definition emphasizes the ecological aspect of disturbance and implies identification procedures:

> The emotionally disturbed child is one who, after receiving supportive educational services and counseling assistance available to all students, still exhibits persistent and consistent severe to very severe behavioral disabilities that consequently interfere with productive learning processes. This is the student whose inability to achieve adequate academic progress and satisfactory interpersonal relationships cannot be attributed primarily to physical, sensory, or intellectual deficits. (p. 49)

Similarities among these and other definitions (Dupont, 1969; Graubard, 1973; McDowell, 1975; Moustakas, 1953; Newcomer, 1980) are obvious. The two primary points here can be identified as (1) an inability to establish appropriate relationships and (2) engaging in behavior which deviates from the expectations of individuals observing the behavior.

The expansion of the area of emotional disturbance and the plethora of perspectives and definitions have combined to produce a heterogeneous group of students in classes designated as serving the emotionally handicapped. Consequently, it is possible to observe within the confines of a single EH classroom withdrawn behaviors, highly visible acting-out behaviors, and a range of behaviors between. In most cases, however, it is the defiant, tantrumming, aggressive child who is most frequently referred by teachers for special class placement (Murray & Whittenberger, 1983; Patterson, 1976) and one may expect that these students constitute a notable proportion of those receiving services for the EH.

Classification

The process of identification of emotional handicaps inevitably draws upon some means of classification. Murray and Whittenberger (1983) noted that regardless of clinical or statistical origin, every important system for classification of behavior disorders contains a major category of aggressive types. Substantiation of this resulted from a study of five current texts on EH students in schools (Algozzine, Schmid, & Mercer, 1981; Kauffman, 1981; McDowell et al., 1982; Paul & Epanchin, 1982; Rich, 1982). Numerous classification systems commonly used to determine eligibility for services to EH individuals are illustrated. Among these are the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (GAP) (1968) and Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) (American Psychiatric Association, 1980), both of which are clinical systems, and the systems developed through statistical procedures for use in education such as the Behavior Problem Checklist (BPC) (Peterson & Quay, 1967), Devereux Child Behavior Rating Scale (Spivak & Swift, 1967) and Walker Problem Behavior Identification Checklist (Walker, 1970). Under a variety of terms, these systems each reserve a category of disorder specifically related to aggression. For example, DSM III system uses the term "Conduct Disorder--Aggressive Type"; "Conduct Problem" is used in the BPC and "Acting-Out Behavior" on the Walker. All of these systems require the use of observation although it is largely unstructured observation and is contingent upon observer subjectivity. Behavioral descriptors commonly used to reduce the subjective nature

of the instruments include the following: hits or fights, disruptiveness (tendency to annoy others), destructiveness, negativism (tendency to do the opposite of thing requested), and bullying. The list could be longer but due largely to the relative nature of aggression, not exhaustive. Bandura's (1973) recognition of the circumstantiality of aggression is clear. An excerpt follows:

> For the purposes of the present discussion, aggression is defined as behavior that results in personal injury and in destruction of property. The injury may be psychological (in the form of devaluation or degradation) as well as physical. Although this formulation delimits the phenomenon in a meaningful way, it should be made clear that aversive effects cannot serve as the sole defining characteristics of aggression. Individuals who hurt others while performing a socially sanctioned function (for example, dentists repairing teeth or surgeons making painful incisions) would not be considered as acting in an aggressive manner. Nor would bulldozer operators destroying condemned buildings to make way for new construction be charged with committing aggressive acts.
>
> Conversely, some forms of conduct would be judged aggressive even though no personal injury or property damage occurred. A person who attempted to hurt another individual by firing a gun at him or by striking him with a lethal object, but who happened to miss the unsuspecting victim, would be judged as behaving violently. As the preceding examples show, additional criteria for distinguishing between accidental and intended injury must be used both to exclude numerous pain-producing responses from the category of aggression and to include others that do not injure anyone because they are poorly executed. (p. 5)

Aggression is an anticipated aspect of normal child development and certainly is not restricted to exceptional individuals (Hewett, 1980; Kauffman, 1981). However, intent, intensity, characteristics of the behavior, and the expectations of the observer distinguish normal developmental aggression from aggression characteristic of

EH students. If, then, aggressive children are those most frequently referred for EH services and as a result comprise a large proportion of the class membership, the situation in EH classrooms may be quite volatile. In view of Bandura's (1973) social learning theory of aggression, placement of several aggressive students in one classroom may result in increased levels of aggression. Bandura's theory states that observing aggressive models results in reduction of the observer's self-restraints of overt aggression, inducing the occurrence of dangerous forms of behavior in the observer. The results of a study conducted by Morse, Cutler, and Fink (1964) indicated that in classrooms serving EH students, the major problem as seen by teachers involved control of aggressive, acting-out behavior. What then is the content of training programs of teachers of EH students relevant to controlling aggression?

Teacher Training in Methods of Coping with Aggression

No national professional standards for teachers of EH children exist; teachers are certified in compliance with a variety of guidelines (Parker, 1980). Parker (1980) reported that less than half the states require a practicum in teaching the behaviorally disordered and a methods course. However, recognizing that aggression is a commonly acknowledged characteristic of some EH children, it follows that available teacher training in this area would, in general, include some emphasis on classroom techniques for coping with

aggressive students. The literature does not on the whole support this idea. No articles identifying competencies or course content focusing upon dealing with aggressive behavior were found. Competencies relevant to working with aggressive EH students that are delineated in the literature are, overall, very vague, stated in terms of crisis intervention, counseling, preventive discipline, and behavior management skills (Bell & Semmel, 1978; Blackhurst, McLoughlin, & Price, 1977; Fagen, 1979; Polsgrove & Perth, 1979). Discussion of general skills relevant to the need for specific training in methods for teaching aggressive students is evident to a small extent, however (Bell & Semmel, 1978; Wood, 1979).

Bell and Semmel (1978) argued that the problem of violence and disruption in schools is severe enough to warrant the training of educational specialists to work with disruptive youth. An additional contention is that the need to deal with aggression is frequently increased by the tendency to place disruptive students in self-contained and isolated settings. Bell and Semmel (1978) asserted current teacher training programs are not successful in preparing teachers to respond appropriately to disruptive, delinquent, or socially maladjusted students or the student who exhibits dysfunctional behavior. Among the skills recommended by Bell and Semmel are (1) the ability to intervene in a variety of crisis situations such as anger or emotional upset; (2) the ability to deal with immediate crisis, not past events which possibly exacerbated the current crisis but are not the immediate issue; and (3) the skills to intervene with aggressive, assaultive behaviors. The specific

observable behaviors which would be indicative of these skills were not noted.

In May of 1979, the Advanced Institute for Trainers of Teachers for Seriously Emotionally Disturbed Children and Youth was held at the University of Minnesota. Special time to permit the exchange of ideas among participants was allotted and summaries of these exchange sessions were compiled (Wood, 1979). One group's focus was the critical elements in secondary teacher training for working with emotionally disturbed youth. As a basis for discussion this group used the content of the seven competencies prescribed by Fagen (1979): assessment, behavior management communication/consultation, personal, instructional, administrative, and cognitive. According to Wood (1979), during the group discussion of behavior management, competencies needed for working with aggressive EH students were addressed. Discussed were contracting, reinforcer selection, group and individual counseling, and physical restraint. The use of physical restraint raised differing perspectives. Some individuals objected to the use of physical intervention and encouraged the use of outside law enforcement agencies in confronting the older, acting-out aggressive student. Others suggested that "nonpunitive physical restraint" was warranted by certain individual students. Most members of the group agreed that teachers should be prepared emotionally to confront threatened or actual use of physical aggression by disturbed students and at a minimum be capable of appropriately defending themselves. Two other skills were noted related to teaching the aggressive

student. This group asserted that teachers should be skilled in analyzing aggressive episodes to identify the antecedent conditions leading to violent student behavior in order to minimize their contributions to its future occurrence. Additionally it was suggested that teachers be knowledgeable about methods for teaching their students alternative responses to the use of physical aggression.

Whether or not these or similar skills are a part of training practices for teachers of EH students remains unknown. However, the literature on educating EH children and youth indicates the presence of methods for coping with aggressive students. A summary of such methods is included in the forthcoming section.

Coping with Aggressive Behaviors

Individuals both within and outside the schools have indicated a desire for school personnel to apply more effective methods of dealing with aggressive children. Teachers and students desire a setting conducive to learning, as do parents and community members. The results of the Safe School Study (National Institute of Education, 1977) indicated certain environmental factors such as school size and student involvement in decision making which correlate with levels of aggression. School intervention occurs at two levels: the total school level and the classroom level.

Coping with Aggression at the School Level

Schools have used a number of strategies for coping with aggressive behaviors exhibited by students. Walker (1979) lists several methods enlisted by schools, among which are encouraging the use of drug therapy, referral to mental health or school based counseling programs, and removal from the mainstream. The efficacy of these procedures in dealing with the problem of aggression and for actually supporting positive behavior change has not been unquestionably verified and the practices remain open to criticism.

Drug therapy. If successful, drug therapy has advantages for school personnel. The frequency or intensity of aggressive acts will be decreased and the student, ideally, becomes more amenable to instruction and other interventions such as counseling. It is no wonder that schools have often encouraged the use of psychopharmacological intervention; if not curative, drugs at least may control or substantially decrease aggressive behaviors.

Antipsychotics such as Thorazine (Chlorpromazine) and Haldol (Haloperidol) are commonly used drugs to decrease aggressive behaviors exhibited by EH children and adolescents (Wilson & Sherrets, 1979). Specific side effects to the use of these two drugs include sedation, drowsiness, reduced learning, and dysfunctions of facial muscles (Algozzine, Algozzine, & Countermine, 1978). While the use of these and other psychoactive medications is quite extensive, special attention should be focused on the degree to which benefits, to the school and/or the child, are counterbalanced by side effects (Algozzine, 1981).

Counseling and psychotherapy. Counseling and psychotherapy have also been commonly used school level strategies for coping with aggressive students (Walker, 1979). Walker reported that the emphasis of these out-of-classroom approaches is usually on assisting the aggressive child to identify and comprehend the reasons for his/her actions. It was Walker's contention that such endeavors are fruitless; no evidence exists to substantiate the idea that an aggressive individual's awareness of possible causes for aggressive behavior does in reality have any positive or negative effect upon his/her behavior in the classroom. However, according to Kauffman (1981), while insight into feelings, in isolation, may be ineffective in controlling aggression cognitive and affective factors are useful in controlling aggression when combined with additional factors to produce a compound strategy such as that proposed by Mahoney (1974). Kauffman sees a positive shift in professional education to further study the efficacy of such an approach and a general optimism that new, more useful psychoeducational techniques may evolve. A few of these techniques will be discussed in the forthcoming section on classroom level interventions.

Removal from the mainstream. A third method selected by schools for coping with aggressive students is removal from the mainstream. While Public Law 94-142 was intended to protect the rights of handicapped students it has not stopped the flow of aggressive students from regular classes or out of school entirely. Grosenick (1981) reported that the most prevalent method of service delivery to EH students in public schools is the self-contained class either in the

regular school or in a segregated facility. Additionally, in spite of the fact that schools have been forced to adjust their methods for intervening, educationally and behaviorally, these methods have been imposed upon an administration accustomed to using disciplinary control procedures intended for use with nonhandicapped students (Barnette & Parker, 1982). Among all the categories of exceptionality, being EH is that which is most liable to result in removal from school (Grosenick, 1981) through any of six mechanisms (Grosenick & Huntze, 1980). According to Grosenick and Huntze these six mechanisms include in-school suspension, continuous suspension, shortened school day, homebound instruction, alternative school placement, and ignored truancy. The legality of such measures has been questioned (Kenneth v. Kline, 1977; Phillip Pratt v. Board of Education of Fredrick County, 1980) but these practices remain evident today (Barnette & Parker, 1982).

In addition to school level interventions, methods for coping with aggressive behavior at the classroom level have been identified. The immediacy of the situation may explain the greater variety of classroom level interventions discussed in the literature. Efficacy of some of these has been substantiated while others remain unproven. Proven, disproven, or conclusion unknown, several strategies are currently used at the classroom level and these will be discussed in the following sections.

Coping with Aggression at the Classroom Level

It would be impractical (if not impossible) to develop a complete listing from the literature of strategies teachers use when confronted with the task of maintaining an aggressive student in the classroom. However, texts, directed in total (Redl & Wineman, 1957; Walker, 1979) or in part (Algozzine, 1982; Kauffman, 1981; Rich, 1982), to methods of teaching EH students and categorical publications such as Behavior Disorders, Pointer, and Iowa Perspective provide a representative sampling of strategies teachers serving EH students may use. These strategies may be considered as preventive or consequential, resulting as a response to aggressive behavior. Preventive measures include establishing classroom rules, implementation of point systems and/or cost-response systems, development of contingency contracts, institution of physical fitness programs, certain cognitive behavior modification strategies, and combinations thereof. Verbal interventions (tension decontamination through humor and verbal reprimands), punishments (time-out, corporal punishment, mediation essay, over-correction, and referral to school office) and direct physical restraint are techniques which may be used by the teacher of the EH student in response to aggressive student behavior. The categories of preventive measures and consequential measures may overlap somewhat in content but for the purposes of discussion will be used in this paper.

Preventive measures. Techniques used to establish a classroom environment which decreases the probability of an aggressive outburst are referred to as preventive strategies or measures. Teachers rarely

use only one technique, more commonly drawing on combinations of available methods. No two teachers use the same exact combination of strategies; however, the following may be found in classrooms serving EH students: rules, token or cost-response systems, contracts, physical activity, and cognitive behavior modification techniques. Brief explanation of each follows.

According to Walker and Holland (1979) much inappropriate student behavior would be avoided if standards for behavior were systematically taught. The inclusion of rules is considered to be a key starting point in the behavior management endeavor. Guidelines commonly found for effective classroom rules include these points: (a) rules should be developed by the teacher with input from the group, (b) rules should be listed and stated positively, (c) rules should be kept to seven or less, and (d) rules should be posted (Ruhl & Badger, 1980; Walker & Holland, 1979). Rules alone are not sufficient for preventing aggressive behavior and are generally used in tandem with other strategies such as token economies or contracting.

The use of token or cost-response systems is often established in classrooms as a motivational foundation for appropriate behavior. A token, or point, system involves students receiving points or tokens for compliance with established classroom rules. The points earned by the student may then be exchanged for some backup reinforcer such as tangible objects, edibles, or activities (Olsen, 1982). In a token system earned points become the student's until they are

spent on a reward and may not be reclaimed by the teacher. In contrast, a cost-response system involves both earning and forfeiting points contingent upon behavior (Kauffman, 1981). Cost-response systems have been supported as effective measures in controlling aggressive behaviors (Kauffman, 1981; Walker, Hops, & Fiegenbaum, 1976).

Another behavior management technique, contingency contracting, has been noted in the literature (Algozzine, Schmid, & Mercer, 1981; Kauffman, 1981; Olsen, 1982) related to intervention with behavior disordered children. According to Olsen (1982), a contract is an agreement, written or oral, established between a teacher and a student. The agreement delineates responsibilities of each individual contingent upon behaviors specified in the contract. It is reasonable to assume that the active involvement of the student in the decision making process contributes to a sense of being in control of one's environment, a factor correlated with low levels of violence in schools by the Safe School Study (National Institute of Education, 1977).

The use of physical fitness programs, specifically jogging, as means for dealing with learning and behavior problem students has received some small degree of attention in the literature (Allen, 1980; Perry & Perry, 1977). Physical activity, especially of an aerobic nature, can be a positive, productive outlet for the energies and frustrations students carry with them into the classroom. Allen reported that a daily, ten minute period of jogging reduced the

frequency of disruptive classroom behaviors in a classroom serving exceptional students who exhibited disruptive problem behaviors. The extent of teacher utilization of this or a related strategy is not known from a review of the literature, but some teachers of classrooms serving EH students may be using it.

A variety of strategies fall under the heading cognitive-behavioral techniques. A cognitive-behavioral technique is one in which the theories of cognitive psychologists and behaviorists have merged (Howell, 1979; Kauffman, 1981). Essentially the behavioral (stimulus-response-stimulus) theory of individual behavior is altered to form a new chain (stimulus-thought-response-stimulus). Simply stated, cognitive-behavioral (CB) interventions are directed at altering or developing the self-talk an individual engages in prior to responding to a given situation. Several individuals (Fagen & Long, 1979; Mathew, 1982; Schneider, 1974) have illustrated CB techniques potentially successful in coping with aggression. For example, Mathew utilized systematic training in creative problem-solving skills to reduce aggression in EH, middle school students. Schneider instructed elementary aggressive students to pretend to be a turtle and draw into their shells to control aggressive impulses. The field of cognitive behavior modification (CBM) is still relatively new and these and other techniques continue to be subject to investigation. However, despite the lack of conclusive evidence, CBM techniques are currently being used in classrooms serving EH students (Mathew, 1982).

Teachers of classrooms serving EH students have available to them a number of preventive techniques to reduce the probability of aggressive behaviors. However, when these and other strategies fail, the teacher must turn to reactive measures. What are the consequential techniques drawn upon by teachers when a student exhibits aggressive behaviors?

Consequential measures. Methods a teacher uses after aggressive behavior occurs are referred to as consequential strategies or methods. These techniques may be divided into three categories: verbal intervention, punishment, and physical restraint. The type of aggressive behavior being confronted will probably dictate the steps implemented by the teacher; however, a range of options is available in the literature.

Verbal intervention methods available to the teacher include tension decontamination through humor and reprimands. The use of verbal reprimands involves teacher use of such statements as "stop that," "cut it out," "I'll send you to the office if you don't behave," and other threats, whether idle or sincere. This type of intervention has been shown to be somewhat effective with nondeviant students; however, their power with aggressive students is greatly diminished and may serve only to increase the behavior (Madsen, Becker, Thomas, Koser, & Plager, 1968; Walker, 1979).

Tension decontamination through humor is one of several techniques recommended for use by Redl and Wineman (1957) to manage surface behavior. This particular strategy seems appropriate for inclusion

due to its consequent nature. Tension decontamination through humor involves artful kidding on the part of the teacher in order to divert problems and permit the student a face-saving path out of a high intensity situation. No research into the efficacy of this particular intervention has been discovered in the literature. However, the researcher is personally familiar with situations in which such humor has been successfully used to divert an aggressive outburst.

The use of punishment is widely debated in the literature (Kauffman, 1981; Walker, 1979) but several techniques which may legitimately be termed "punishers" are noted in the relevant literature. These include corporal punishment, time-out, overcorrection, mediation essays, and referral to the office.

Spanking, paddling, or inflicting physical pain are corporal punishment procedures used in schools. The primary concern with the use of punishment as an intervention with aggressive children is that it will merely set a vicious example for the student, resulting in counteraggression and coercion (Kauffman, 1981).

Two punishment strategies developed from a behavior modification basis are time-out and overcorrection. Time-out, also termed isolation, has many connotations (Grayson, Kiraly, & McKinnon, 1979). Generally the term refers to placing the student in a setting which prohibits social interaction and reinforcement. The setting may be a corner of the classroom or complete removal to a time-out room. The effectiveness of isolation has been illustrated in the work of Boston and Bailey (1969), Burchard and Barrera (1972), and Ramp,

Ulrich, and Dulaney (1971). Olsen (1982) noted that while time-out may reduce undesirable behaviors, the strategy fails to teach more appropriate alternative behaviors. Overcorrection, another punishment procedure, is not open to this criticism.

The term "overcorrection" is used to describe two similar but different strategies: restitution and positive practice. Restitution requires that the offending student make restitution for damages he or she has caused (repairing a piece of another child's clothing that he/she tore plus paying to have it cleaned). Foxx and Azrin (1972) successfully used this procedure to reduce incidents of furniture throwing which had been unresponsive to time-out and social approval. Webster and Azrin (1973) indicated the effectiveness of positive practice overcorrection in reducing verbal and physical aggression. Positive practice procedures require the individual to practice repeatedly, for a short time period, a more appropriate, alternative behavior to the deviant behavior.

The mediation essay (Blackwood, 1970), another punishment procedure, is within the realm of cognitive behavior modification. Briefly, a mediation essay is a series of printed questions and responses that presents verbal images of specific positive and negative consequences for a student's appropriate or inappropriate behaviors. Upon the student engaging in an unsuitable behavior, the teacher (1) selects a mediation essay relevant to the student's deviant behavior and (2) assigns the student to complete two copies of the essay. Positive and negative consequences are built into

the procedure to deal with the student's response to the assignment. The content of the essay mediates and guides the student to choose the more appropriate behavior. Several researchers (Blackwood, 1970; MacPherson, Candee, & Hohman, 1974) have conducted studies, the results of which support the use of this technique. It is not, however, mentioned in any of the five current texts (Algozzine et al., 1981; Kauffman, 1981; McDowell et al., 1982; Paul & Epanchin, 1982; Rich, 1982) reviewed in this study on educating EH children.

The final punishment procedure to be discussed involves the classroom teacher's use of outside personnel to deal with aggressive students. Morse, Cutler, and Fink (1964) reported that 85 percent of the teachers in classrooms serving EH students who responded to this item of the survey, referred problem behavior students to the principal. This method effectively, though for a short period of time, removes the student from the teacher's responsibility to the principal and the options available at the school level.

Physical restraint is a final option for dealing with aggressive behaviors. Generally, the use of physical restraint is discouraged except in an emergency situation (Paul & Epanchin, 1982; Ruhl & Hughes, 1982; Wood, 1980) and can only be used effectively when the teacher feels confident of their capability to hold the child. Situations warranting physical restraint include occasions when a student may harm self or others (Paul & Epanchin, 1982; Ruhl & Hughes, 1982). The risk of a struggle resulting in harm to the child accompanies the use of physical restraint and raises questions of teacher liability. Kallan (1971) noted that in such situations the

courts have been primarily interested in the question of "reasonableness." In Maine and New Jersey distinctions have been drawn between corporal punishment and physical restraint. The use of the latter is acceptable when implemented to protect people or property (Paul & Epanchin, 1982). Regardless, like corporal punishment, the use of physical restraint models an aggressive solution to problems and this may have undesirable effects.

It is apparent from the literature that aggressive behaviors are a recognized characteristic of some EH students. Additionally, those students exhibiting aggressive behaviors are recognized as a major concern to their teachers despite the numerous techniques suggested in the literature for coping with aggression. The opportunity to further clarify the nature and extent of the problem has been missed by past researchers (Bayh, 1975; National Education Association, 1956; National Institute of Education, 1977) investigating violence and disruption in the schools. Their studies serve as guides for the current study and as such they are included here.

Related Studies on Aggressive Behavior in Schools

In the literature of the past 30 years, only three studies concerned with aggressive behavior in the schools are visible. In order of publication they are (1) the National Education Association (NEA) study (1956), the study conducted by a congressional subcommittee under the direction of Senator Bayh (1975), and the Safe School Study (National Institute of Education, 1977). A brief synopsis of each

study will be presented followed by a summary of the key points relevant to the current study.

Teacher Opinion on Pupil Behavior 1955-56 (NEA, 1956)

The National Education Association (NEA) used a questionnaire to poll 10,000 classroom teachers in rural and urban schools at elementary, junior, and senior high school levels, concerning their opinion on several topics. The following areas were targeted for investigation in the study:

1. The extent to which classroom teachers are disturbed by problem behavior in students.
2. The relationship between behavior in schools and other factors (e.g., community, quality of homelife limited teacher authority to manage and control behavior problems).
3. The specific type of misbehavior by grade level and by community type.
4. The school and student factors perceived as contributing to behavior problems.

Of the 10,000 teachers receiving the questionnaires, 4,270 responded. Analyses of the results indicated that school violence was an emerging problem in the 1950's. In one section of the study it was indicated that 28 percent of the teachers in urban settings had knowledge of an act of physical aggression against a teacher within the previous 12 month period. It was also clear that problems were critical in "slum" areas. The overall results of this report merely hinted at the presence of a problem; the tone was not one of urgency. Twenty

years later when the next related study was released, the tone had changed considerably and the message was definitely one of alarm.

Our Nation's Schools--A Report Card: "A" in School Violence and Vandalism (Bayh, 1975)

Chaired by Senator Birch Bayh, the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency began an investigation of school violence and vandalism during the years 1971-1975. Senate hearings were held and the testimony of 419 witnesses, students, teachers, parents, and administrators was heard relative to the extent and causes of several concerns. These concerns included substance abuse, runaways, dropouts, and the confinement of youth to detention centers. Additionally questionnaire data were collected from 757 school district superintendents. The intent of the questionnaires was to discover the extent and scope of violence, vandalism, and school dropouts during the 1970-71, 1971-72, and 1972-73 school years. Specific information was requested on homicide, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, and drug and alcohol offenses. The results indicated a pronounced trend. An excerpt follows:

> Homicides increased by 18.5 percent;
> Rapes and attempted rapes increased by 40.1 percent;
> Robberies increased by 36.7 percent;
> Assaults on students increased by 85.3 percent;
> Assaults on teachers increased by 77.4 percent;
> Burglaries of school buildings increased by 11.8 percent;
> Drug and alcohol offenses on school property increased by 37.5 percent;
> Dropouts increased by 11.7 percent; and
> Weapons confiscated increased by 54.4 percent. (Bayh, 1975, p. 4)

Added to the information gathered through the testimony of witnesses and responses to questionnaires was information of a general nature solicited by letter from 50 school security directors. Directors were requested to provide any information they thought appropriate to the study and this was added to the other data. One additional consequence of the Bayh study was the Safe School Study Act of 1974 which charged the National Institute of Education (NIE) with the responsibility of conducting further research on crime in the schools.

The Safe School Study (NIE, 1977)

The National Institute of Education (NIE) targeted all public schools in the United States as the population of interest. It was determined that regardless of the extensive literature on juvenile delinquency, not enough information was available on variables related to violence in schools; the Safe School Study was to gather information which would act as a basis for later studies Survey methods were chosen as being appropriate to the target population and the type of data and information desired.

Survey methods were used in three phases to gather information on the following:

1. The frequency, gravity, and incidence of crimes against individuals and crimes against property.
2. The number and locale of schools affected.
3. The individual perspectives and experiences relative to risk and victimization among teachers and students.

4. The replacement or repair cost of items damaged, destroyed or stolen.

5. Prevention and control methods implemented by schools.

Survey techniques used to gather this information included (a) mailed questionnaires submitted to principals, on-site questionnaires of teachers and students, on-site interviews of student crime victims, and case studies of 10 secondary schools. The following are representative of the findings:

1. Gravity of the situation--the growth rate of crime in the schools leveled off in the 1970's; students in schools experience a greater risk of violence than those off school grounds; the problem is greatest in junior high schools.

2. Extent of violence--all schools in all areas are susceptible to crime; in a typical school month 157,000 cases of crime and disruption occur.

3. Violence against persons--in a typical school month 282,000 secondary students and 5,200 teachers are attacked at school; 16 percent of students avoid at least three locations in school due to fear; 12 percent of secondary teachers are threatened with harm; half of all teachers participating in the study reported being verbally abused.

4. Violence against property--42,000 incidents per month; average cost per incident is $481.00; schools are burglarized five times more frequently than stores; annual cost of repair or replacement resulting from criminal actions is over $200 million.

Summary of Studies

The three studies presented here each drew upon survey techniques to identify the extent, type, and causes of violence in schools. Two of the studies (Bayh, 1975; National Institute of Education, 1977) added to the data derived from questionnaires, data garnered through interviews and public testimony. Each study focused on aggressive behaviors across the total school population with breakdowns by grade level and locational domain. The NEA's (1956) study and the Safe School Study (NIE, 1977) specifically sought information on the effects of school violence on teachers. Descriptive statistics were used to report results in the NEA (1956) and the Safe School Study. A combination of descriptive statistics and summaries of testimony were used by the Bayh committee. None of the three studies resulted in any data indicating the nature and extent of violence in terms of any area of exceptionality and no data were substantiated through direct classroom observation. Useful parts of the picture were still missing.

Chapter Summary and Implications for Study

The characteristics of emotionally handicapped students, the paucity of identified specific teacher training practices for working with aggressive students, and the nature of interventions utilized in settings serving EH youth supported the need for information describing the extent of aggression in special education environments. Regardless of the existence of a few previous studies on related areas (violence and vandalism in public schools in general, the

efficacy of various methods used for intervening with aggression) a thorough knowledge of the nature, extent, and classroom correlates of aggression in classrooms serving EH children was not to be found in the literature. Consequently, the type of information that would direct an experimental study did not exist.

These facts suggest that a nonexperimental research design would be the most efficient method of developing a knowledge base upon which to build future studies. Further, information relative to the nature and extent of aggression in EH classrooms could be collected via questionnaires as well as classroom observations. Consequently, survey of public school teachers and measurement of the rate of different types of aggressive acts in a number of settings serving EH students resulted in this type of descriptive information. Concomitant measurement of known and anticipated correlates of aggression and analysis of the relationships between the two sets of variables, provided indicators of the significance of each of a wide spectrum of factors related to aggression in settings serving EH students. This type of data met the descriptive intent of the study and served as a basis for identifying aggression prevention/coping measures that might be examined in subsequent research. A description of the design of the study is presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of this investigation was to describe the nature, extent, and impact of aggression in public school, special education settings serving emotionally handicapped (EH) students within the state of Florida. To fulfill this purpose, data were collected in two phases from teachers serving emotionally handicapped students. Chapter III presents methods used in preparation for and implementation of each phase of the study. To facilitate presentation of this information, the chapter is divided into four sections: sample selection and participants, development of research instrumentation, procedures, and treatment of the data.

Sample Selection and Participants

The target population was teachers in all public school settings serving EH students within the state of Florida. A stratified random sampling design was used to identify participants in the study. To provide a scientific representation of the population, a list of all 67 school districts in Florida with a breakdown based on student population was obtained from the Florida Department of Education. According to D. Wells, Florida's consultant for the emotionally handicapped (personal communication, July 7, 1983), the Bureau for Exceptional

Students uses a "small" (less than 10,000), "medium" (10,000 to 35,000), and "large" (over 35,000) distinction because issues are usually similar for size-alike areas. This categorization is not unlike the distinctions of "rural," "suburban," and "urban" used in previous studies of this type and the former system was used in the present research. Of the 67 school districts in Florida, 19 percent are large, 25 percent are medium, and 56 percent are small. Consequently, one large, one medium, and two small districts was the necessary minimum to produce a sample that approximated the distribution of Florida school districts. Through discussion with individuals familiar with record keeping procedures of Florida school systems it became obvious that small and medium districts, as compared with large districts, would more easily access information necessary in the identification of study participants, thus it was anticipated that proportionately fewer large districts would respond with the desired information. Additionally, a greater number of smaller districts was necessary, consequently, equal numbers of small, medium and large districts were contacted initially.

The name of each school district was put on a card. Cards were then divided into stacks according to their small, medium, or large designation. Six cards were randomly selected from each stack. The director of exceptional student programs for each district selected (18 in all) was mailed a packet July 15, 1983, consisting of the following: (a) cover letter soliciting cooperation in identifying special education teachers of EH students within that district (see Appendix C), (b) reply form (see Appendix D), (c) study information

sheet (see Appendix E), and (d) one return envelope, postage paid. Directors were asked to respond no later than August 10, 1983.

Ten directors or their designees replied to the request for assistance with identifying teachers of EH students in their district. Of these, one district's director indicated an inability to cooperate within the proposed timeframe. However, four small districts, three medium districts, and two large districts responded with the necessary list of teachers of EH students. This proportion of districts would offer an even closer approximation of the total population of EH teachers than the necessary minimum discussed above so all nine districts were included in the study. This process resulted in the identification of 311 teachers who were contacted for participation in Phase I of the study.

An additional step was used to identify Phase II participants. Included with the letter requesting Phase I involvement was a solicitation of involvement in Phase II. Teachers were asked to indicate their willingness to participate by completing the designated area of the Phase I questionnaire (see Appendix F). All individuals agreeing to participate in Phase II and providing sufficient information to again contact them were so included.

Ideally the design of the study would have resulted in a single group of individuals participating in both phases of the study. This situation was not manifest however; all teachers electing to complete the Phase I questionnaire did not volunteer to conduct in-classroom frequency counts. Consequently information on two groups of participants is presented briefly here and more comprehensively in Table 1. It should be noted that in a few instances of text presentation

Table 1

Demographics of Study Participants

Demographic	Phase I n	Phase I %	Phase II n	Phase II %	Chi Square
Sex					2.74
Male	47	26	15	20	
Female	131	74	60	80	
Age					5.27
21-24	24	14	12	16	
25-30	73	41	33	44	
31-34	33	19	13	17	
35-40	23	13	8	11	
41-48	17	10	4	5	
49+	8	5	5	7	
Professional Preparation					2.20
Bachelor's	88	49	37	49	
Master's	85	48	36	48	
Specialist	3	1	1	1	
Doctorate	2	1	1	1	
Years Experience Teaching EH					10.81
First year	10	6	7	9	
1 year	8	5	3	4	
2 years	22	12	5	7	
3-4 years	50	28	23	29	
5-6 years	35	20	12	16	
7-9 years	30	17	17	23	
10+ years	23	12	8	11	
Service Delivery Model					.96
Self-contained	46	26	19	26	
Resource	91	51	40	53	
Homebound	2	1			
Special school	36	20	15	20	
Hospital or mental health class	3	2	1	1	

Table 1--Continued

Demographic	Phase I n	Phase I %	Phase II n	Phase II %	Chi Square
Classification					3.93
EH, not SED	92	52	37	49	
SED	37	21	19	25	
EH and SED	17	10	6	8	
Cross-categorical(EH,LD,MH)	14	8	5	7	
Combination EH and LD	13	7	6	8	
Combination EH and MH	4	2	1	1	
Other(EH,SED, and LD)	1	1	1	1	
Grade Level*					
Elementary (1-6)	110	62	45	60	.18
Junior High (7-9)	61	34	29	39	1.11
Senior High (10-12)	34	19	12	16	.81
Classroom Aide					.06
Yes	101	57	43	57	
No	77	43	32	42	
District Size					6.53**
Small	16	9	2	3	
Medium	33	19	16	21	
Large	129	73	57	76	
Total Number	178		75		

Note. EH=emotionally handicapped; SED=severely emotionally disturbed; LD=learning disabled; MH=mentally handicapped.

* Some individuals teach across levels so are counted for each or all levels.

**$p < .05$.

figures from the table have been consolidated for the purpose of reporting general characteristics.

Phase I Participants

A total of 178 teachers currently serving EH students in grades one through twelve participated in Phase I of the study. Of these, 26 percent were male. Seventy-three percent were employed by large districts, 19 percent by medium, and the remainder by small districts. The majority (51 percent) taught in resource settings and fell within the 25-34 age range (60 percent). One hundred twenty-seven (74 percent) volunteered to complete the Phase II observation instrument. However, several of these individuals failed to provide information which enabled the researcher to include them in the Phase II mailing, or replied after the observation forms were posted; thus the number of potential Phase II participants dropped to 104.

Phase II Participants

Observation forms were mailed to 104 individuals who had volunteered to participate in Phase II. Seventy-five of these persons returned completed forms. Of these, 20 percent were male and the majority (61 percent) were between 25 and 34 years of age. Seventy-six percent of the Phase II participants worked in large school districts and 53 percent taught in resource settings.

A chi-square analysis was performed investigating the similarities between individuals participating in Phase I and those participating in Phase II. The results indicated significant differences (χ^2 [2, N=178] = 6.53, $p < .05$) between the two groups only on the demographic variable of district size; teachers from small districts comprised a

significantly smaller percentage of the Phase II group than the Phase I group and teachers from large districts comprised a significantly larger portion of the Phase II group.

Instrumentation

Two research instruments were used in the study, a questionaire designed to be self-administered and a classroom observation form. The former was field-tested prior to its use.

Phase I Questionnaire

The primary goal of Phase I was to collect survey information from teachers serving EH students. In addition to demographic data, information in three areas was sought: (a) the nature and frequency of aggression in settings serving EH students as perceived by the teachers in those settings, (b) information on the type of, if any, training teachers of EH students had received in methods of coping with classroom aggression, and (c) interventions used in dealing with aggression. Based upon personal experience and the review of the literature, an instrument was designed by the researcher to collect the above information. For example, interventions listed on the form were taken from the relevant professional literature and some components of training in dealing with aggression derived from the researcher's personal experience. Drafts of the questionnaire were twice subjected to scrutiny by a panel of individuals familiar with the education of exceptional children. Initially the form was examined by a group of individuals who had direct classroom experience. It

was then refined and presented for additional comments to a group of individuals having expert research backgrounds. Any concerns raised through this procedure were organized into a two-page form (see Appendix G) which was affixed to the questionnaire in preparation for a field-test.

The instrument was field-tested on 30 teachers of EH students in Louisville, Kentucky. Twenty individuals returned the questionnaire with attached forms relating personal reaction to the questionnaire. The results of the field-test supported the use of distinctions among types of aggressive behaviors, definitions of terminology, and the instrument format. Feedback from participants in the field-test also indicated that approximately 15 to 20 minutes were required to complete the questionnaire itself and that a small notepad which had been proposed as an incentive for participation was either unnecessary or undesirable. The questionnaire in final form is presented in Appendix F.

Phase II Observation Form

The goal of the second phase of the study was to obtain, from teachers of EH students, a frequency count of behaviors perceived by them to be within the categories of aggression as defined by the researcher. The same five categories of aggressive behavior utilized on the Phase I questionnaire and defined in Chapter I were used for purposes of observation. The instrument (see Appendix H) was designed to permit observation for one, five-day, school week. Ease of teacher implementation and minimal disruption of classroom activities were major considerations in structuring the observation form.

Procedures

Phase I Procedures

After identification of teachers through district special education coordinators as described above, Phase I packets were prepared for each teacher specified. Each packet contained (a) cover letter (see Appendix I), (b) guidelines for the questionnaire and description of involvement in Phase II (see Appendix J), (c) Phase I survey instrument (see Appendix F), (d) postage paid, return envelope, and (e) raffle ticket for a mini-professional library (see Appendix K). The latter was included to increase the response rate on the questionnaire (a rate of 60 percent or 186 individuals was desired).

Two means of disseminating the Phase I packets were used, the United States Postal Service direct mail and personal contact. The packets were mailed directly to teachers in eight of the participating counties on August 31, 1983. The EH contact person for one school district personally disseminated packets to the appropriate teachers in his county, adding verbal support for individuals participating in the study. Of the 311 teachers contacted personally or through the mail 129 returned completed questionnaires by September 19, 1983, a response rate of 41 percent. Follow-up letters (see Appendices L and M) and additional questionnaires were mailed on September 22, 1983, to individuals who had failed to return their form by the deadline and another 49 responses were obtained, bringing the total response rate on the Phase I instrument to 57 percent. Of those

teachers participating in Phase I, 127 volunteered to cooperate with Phase II. However, 23 of these individuals failed either to respond prior to dissemination of Phase II packets or to provide sufficient information to include them in the Phase II mailing bringing the potential number of Phase II participants to 104.

Phase II Procedures

The intent of Phase II was to collect frequency data on the occurrence of aggressive behavior in settings where EH students are served. Following identification of participants for the second phase of the study, an observation form (see Appendix H), note of appreciation (see Appendix N), and a postage paid, return envelope were mailed directly to these volunteers. Observations and recordings of aggressive behaviors in settings serving EH students were conducted by 75 teachers during the week of October 3 through October 7, 1983. In each of 12 of these settings, one two-hour observation was also conducted by an outside observer to verify the accuracy of the teacher reported frequency counts.

During the month of September, 1983, three doctoral students selected to function as paid outside observers completed a half-day training program designed to establish inter-observer agreement among those acting as observers. Training consisted of definition of the five types of aggressive behaviors and the viewing of films each containing at least one example of each type of incident of aggressive behavior of interest in this study. These observers used the Phase II observation instrument identical to that used by the teachers. During

training interobserver agreement rates between the trainer and each of the observers respectively were as follows: 80 percent, 90 percent, and 95 percent. Interobserver agreement rates established between the outside observers and teachers in those settings visited by the outside observers ranged from 80 percent to 87 percent during actual classroom observation.

On October 7, 1983, the final day of classroom frequency counts, follow-up postcards (Appendix O) were mailed to all teachers receiving Phase II observation forms. These postcards were intended to remind participants to return their observation records, even if no incidents of aggression had been recorded. The postcards were successful as indicated by a personal note from one participant to the researcher expressing appreciation for the "little reminder."

Treatment of the Data

Data from both phases of the study were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, & Bent, 1975) subprograms which will produce frequency counts and crosstabulation analyses. These programs provided the descriptive analyses warranted by the study. The subprogram option of analysis using chi-square was chosen to determine the significance of certain relationships having special interest to the researcher.

Data from Phase I of the study were coded for analysis and entered onto cards as they were returned to the researcher. Direct entry of raw data from Phase II forms onto cards was possible. However, it was necessary for these same data to be recoded by the computer, changing them to categorical data for purposes of analysis

of certain relationships (e.g., sex of teacher by observed frequency of verbal aggression). Additionally, a few Phase II participants maintained observation counts for less than the five days due to teacher workdays or personal illness. For these cases the mean (based on the other four days' data) of the reported frequency for a given category of aggression was computed and inserted for the missing value. When chi-square analysis procedures were used, results were considered valid only when a maximum of 20 percent of the valid cells had expected cell frequencies of less than five. Once analyzed statistically, a narrative summary of the data as well as tabular descriptions were formulated. These written summaries and implications to be drawn from them comprise the fourth and fifth chapters respectively.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The goal of this study was to illustrate the nature and extent of aggression occurring in special education settings in which Florida students meeting the state criteria for emotionally handicapped (EH) are served. The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the study. Data from the Phase I questionnaire and the Phase II observation form have been compiled and included herein. To enhance clarity, the chapter and pertinent data are discussed in three sections corresponding to those questions formally stated in Chapter I. The main sections are the phenomenon of aggression, teacher training in coping with aggression, and methods of dealing with aggression.

The Phenomenon of Aggression

The first and primary question of interest in this study was stated as follows: What is the nature and extent of aggression as it occurs in settings where emotionally handicapped students are served? Data from both Phase I and Phase II provided information relevant to this question. For purposes of the study, aggression

was delineated into the following five types: (a) extreme physical aggression toward others, (b) mild physical aggression toward others, (c) physical aggression toward self, (d) physical aggression toward inanimate objects, and (e) verbal aggression. (Definitions of these as used in this study may be found in Chapter I.) The data have been compiled in tabular form in Tables 2 through 9 and the following text is a summary of the key points. In selected instances of textual presentation figures from both the tables have been consolidated to report general trends.

Extreme Physical Aggression Toward Others

Of the 178 teachers returning the Phase I questionnaire, 84 percent reported having encountered incidents of hitting, choking, or other forms of extreme physical aggression among their students (see Table 2 for a complete breakdown). Of these, 64 percent indicated that in their experience students, teachers, and aides had all been targets of such actions. Over half (56 percent) of those reporting incidents of extreme physical aggression toward others indicated that such events occurred at least once a month. Twenty-nine percent reported weekly occurrences.

Frequency data derived from Phase II observations (see Table 3) were consistent with the Phase I results. Using "low" (0-1 incidents), "medium" (2-3 incidents), and "high" (4 or more incidents) distinctions, 81 percent of the Phase II participants reported low rates of extreme physical aggression toward others. Medium and high rates were reported by 13 percent and 5 percent respectively. Twenty-nine percent of those

Table 2

Teachers' Perceptions of the Nature and Extent of Physical Aggression

	Extreme/ Toward Others	Mild/ Toward Others	Toward Self	Toward Objects
Number (and percent) reporting occurrence	149 (84%)	156 (88%)	130 (73%)	167 (94%)
Number (and percent of those reporting occurrence) reporting targets of aggression				
Teacher/Aide, only	4 (3%)	7 (5%)		
Student, only	49 (34%)	58 (38%)		
Teacher, aide, and student	93 (64%)	89 (58%)		
Number (and percent of those reporting its occurrence) reporting frequency of aggression				
Daily 1-3 times	5 (3%)	12 (8%)	7 (5%)	26 (16%)
4 or more	0	1 (1%)	7 (5%)	7 (4%)
Weekly 1-2 times	21 (14%)	22 (14%)	11 (9%)	29 (17%)
3-4 times	18 (12%)	17 (11%)	18 (14%)	16 (10%)
Monthly Once	21 (14%)	25 (16%)	10 (8%)	18 (11%)
2-3 times	19 (13%)	37 (24%)	24 (19%)	38 (23%)
Yearly 1-3 times	44 (30%)	28 (18%)	45 (35%)	18 (11%)
4-7 times	21 (14%)	14 (9%)	7 (5%)	15 (9%)

Table 3

Percentage of Teachers Reporting Frequency of
Incidents of Physical Aggression During a Five-Day Period

Type of Incident	Percentage Actually Reporting	Range	Frequency of Incident		
			Low (0-1)	Medium (2-3)	High (4-more)
Physical Aggression:					
extreme toward others	29	0- 7	81	13	5
mild toward others	63	0-36	52	23	25
toward self	24	0-11	89	5	5
toward objects	64	0-19	49	22	28

teachers monitoring incidents of aggression during the specified week reported incidents of extreme physical aggression. This is the same percentage of Phase I teachers reporting weekly encounters with extreme physical aggression toward others.

Chi-square analyses were conducted to determine the relation between both teachers' perceived and observed rates of extreme physical aggression toward others and the various demographic variables. No significant differences were found using a 5 percent level of confidence.

Mild Physical Aggression Toward Others

Incidents of biting, scratching, or similar acts of physical aggression toward others were reported by 88 percent of the teachers responding to the questionnaire (see Table 2 for greater detail). Targets of this type aggression were again most often (58 percent) reported to be students, teachers, and aides. The most commonly reported frequency of occurrence (40 percent) was between one and three times per month, with a total of 74 percent indicating at least monthly occurrences. A total of 34 percent reported weekly incidents of this type.

Sixty-three percent of the Phase II participants recorded incidents of mild physical aggression toward others during the observation week (see Table 3). The range of number of reported observed events was between 1 and 36. Using the low, medium, and high classification described above 52 percent reported low rates, 23 percent reported medium rates, and 25 percent reported high rates.

Analyses to determine the significance of the relationships between demographic variables and the extent of mild aggression toward others as reported by both Phase I and Phase II teachers were conducted. Using chi-square and a significance level of .05, no significant differences were indicated.

Physical Aggression Toward Self

Encounters with students engaging in self-mutilation or battering were reported by 73 percent of the Phase I participants; this was the smallest percentage of teachers who had experienced aggression of any type in their students. This behavior was reported by 51 percent of those teachers indicating its occurrence to happen between thrice monthly and once a year. However 34 percent perceived it to occur at least once a week. Table 2 presents a total breakdown of the data.

The data presented in Table 3 indicates that, during the week of the Phase II observation physical aggression toward self was substantiated as being the least commonly encountered form of physical aggression. It was reported as occurring at low, medium, and high rates (as previously defined) by the following corresponding percentages of Phase II participants: 89 percent, 5 percent, and 5 percent. Twenty-four percent of Phase II teachers reported having observed incidents at frequencies ranging from 1 to 11 times over the course of the observation week. This percentage (24 percent) of Phase II teachers is somewhat lower than the percentage of Phase I teachers (33 percent) indicating weekly encounters with self-abusive students.

Chi-square analyses were performed on the relations between various demographic variables and both perceived and observed rates of incidents of physical aggression toward self. Using a 5 percent confidence level, no significant differences between perceived and actual amounts of self-abuse were noted.

Physical Aggression Toward Inanimate Objects

On the Phase I questionnaire, the most frequently (94 percent) reported type of physical aggression (see Table 2) was that directed toward objects. Property damage occurring a minimum of two to three times monthly was reported by 70 percent of Phase I participants specifically indicating this type aggression. Forty-seven percent perceived it to happen at least once weekly.

Sixty-four percent of the Phase II teachers reported observing students engaged in physical aggression toward inanimate objects during the specified week of observation. Weekly totals of such incidents ranged from 1 to 19. Forty-nine percent of Phase II participants reported low rates, while 28% reported high rates.

The results of multiple chi-square analyses of the relations between rates of physical aggression toward inanimate objects as reported through the questionnaire and the observation form indicated one significant difference. A significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 9.019$, $p < .05$) was noted between grade level of settings and observed physical aggression toward objects; higher levels of this type aggression were reported by elementary teachers as compared with non-elementary teachers.

Verbal Aggression

Isolated (not concurrent with acts of physical aggression) incidents of verbal aggression were reported by 97 percent of the Phase I respondents, making this the most commonly reported type of aggression (see Table 4). As with the other types, verbal aggression was largely directed nondiscriminantly toward teachers, aides, and students. Verbally aggressive behavior was reported to occur at least once daily by 68 percent of these teachers and 92 percent indicated at least weekly occurrences.

As with extreme physical aggression toward others, frequency data derived from Phase II observations were consistent with the Phase I results. Ninety-two percent of the Phase II teachers reported witnessing student verbal aggression during the specified observation period. Again using low, medium, and high categories but with different criteria for inclusion in each (low is 0-15, medium is 16-35, high is 36 or more), 48 percent of Phase II participants indicated low rates. Twenty-four percent reported medium rates and 28 percent reported high rates.

Chi-square analyses were performed on the relations between demographic variables and the perceived and observed frequencies of verbal aggression using a .05 level of significance. There were no significant relationships in any of the variables compared in these analyses.

Confidence in Coping with Aggression

On the Phase I questionnaire, teachers were asked if they felt confident in their ability to deal with incidents of classroom

Table 4

Teachers' Perceptions of the Nature and Extent of Verbal Aggression

Number (and percent) reporting occurrence		172	(97%)
Number (and percent of those reporting its' occurrence) reporting targets of aggression			
Teacher/aide, only		7	(4%)
Student, only		23	(14%)
Teacher, aide, and student		139	(82%)
Number (and percent of those reporting its' occurrence) reporting frequency of aggression			
Hourly	1-3 times	25	(15%)
	4 or more	9	(5%)
Daily	1-3 times	45	(26%)
	4 or more	38	(22%)
Weekly	Once	9	(5%)
	2-4 times	32	(19%)
Monthly	Once	3	(2%)
	2-3 times	11	(6%)

aggression. A majority of respondents, 84 percent, indicated being confident and 16 percent reported a lack of confidence. The next logical questions, then, are those pertinent to (a) the amount and type of training experienced by teachers and (b) the intervention most commonly used by them.

Teacher Training in Coping with Aggression

The second question of interest in this study was as follows: What is the nature and extent of the teachers' previous training in methods for coping with aggression in settings where emotionally handicapped students are served? Data obtained through the Phase I questionnaire was the source of information for the answer. Among the 178 respondents to the survey 80 percent had received training in specific methods for dealing with aggressive classroom situations. Analysis of the relationship between training and level of confidence was performed using a chi-square test for significance and a confidence level of 5 percent (see Table 5). Study of these results indicated a significant relationship between training and level of confidence. It should be noted that for those individuals indicating a lack of confidence, 53 percent had not experienced any specific training in methods of coping with aggression, compared with 14 percent for those not trained yet expressing confidence in their ability to deal with aggression.

Table 5

Relationship Between Training and Level of Confidence

	Training	
	Yes	No
Confidence		
No	15	13
Yes	21	126

$\chi^2 = 22.215$, $p > .05$

What is the nature of training received by 80 percent of the Phase I teachers? The majority of these trained teachers (69 percent) had received some or all of their training through inservice sponsored by a school system with 31 percent and 35 percent having been trained as part of their undergraduate and/or graduate college courses respectively. Little more than half (57 percent) of the reported training was eight hours or less in duration and was experienced as being a combination of lecture, demonstration, and practice by 73 percent of those having had the training. Preventive strategies were the more commonly reported component (see Table 6) being indicated by 83 percent of trained teachers with nonaggressive physical restraint techniques specified by 78 percent. The least frequently noted training component (50 percent) was a method or methods of breaking up a fight.

Table 6

Components of Teacher Training in Dealing with Aggression--Experienced and Desired

Components	Respondents		
	Having had training n=141 (80%)*	Wanting more training n=121 (68%)*	Wanting initial training n= 32 (18%)*
Nonaggressive physical restraint	110 (78%)	60 (50%)	27 (77%)
Aggressive physical restraint	73 (52%)	42 (35%)	13 (37%)
Methods of escaping a student hold	94 (67%)	44 (41%)	16 (46%)
Methods of deflecting a student attack	93 (66%)	47 (44%)	20 (57%)
Methods of approaching an aggressive student	99 (70%)	72 (68%)	29 (83%)
Methods of breaking up a fight	70 (50%)	64 (60%)	25 (71%)
Preventive classroom strategies	117 (83%)	68 (64%)	32 (91%)

Note. *Percentages in columns are statistically adjusted percentages and are based on respective number of participants having had training, wanting more training, or wanting initial training.

Respondents were invited to list any components of their training not identified on the survey form. A few indicated the inclusion of one or more of the following components in their training: nutrition and exercise factors, methods of dealing with verbal aggression, Aikido-karate, and team executed physical restraints.

Of the 141 participants having received training in coping with classroom aggression, 86 percent (121) or 68 percent of the questionnaire respondents were interested in additional training or a review of previously trained techniques. Table 6 contains a summary of that data. The greatest areas of interest among this group for more training were (a) methods of approaching an aggressive student and (b) preventive classroom strategies with 68 percent and 64 percent of teachers, respectively, expressing a desire for these components. Methods of breaking up a fight were noted by 60 percent and nonaggressive physical restraint by 50 percent of these teachers.

Along with general comments requesting review training sessions, several suggestions for additional components to be included with re-training were offered by the respondents. To options cited on the questionnaire the following were added: dealing with verbally aggressive and passive aggressive behaviors, use of seclusion, how to move a student to time-out, how to set up a classroom to prevent aggression, team restraints, dealing with self-abusive students, cognitive behavior modification therapy, and any new techniques.

Of the 37 teachers specifying that they had not had previous training in methods of coping with aggressive student behavior, 86 percent or 18 percent of the questionnaire respondents indicated a

desire for such training. Their responses were similar to those of individuals who had training yet were interested in additional instruction (see Table 6). Priorities for desired first time training (in descending order) were preventive classroom strategies (91 percent), methods of approaching an aggressive student (83 percent), nonaggressive physical restraint techniques (77 percent), and methods of breaking up a fight (71 percent).

One additional question was asked on the Phase I survey form relative to teacher training in methods of coping with aggression. The question was: "Do you believe that teachers of emotionally handicapped students should have training in dealing with aggressive behavior in the classroom?" Ninety-nine percent of the Phase I respondents indicated that it was their opinion that teachers of EH students should have such training.

Methods of Dealing with Aggression

The following was the final question of the study: What are common consequences and/or methods used to deal with aggressive behaviors exhibited in settings were emotionally handicapped students are served? The Phase I questionnaire was the medium for determining the answer to this query. To organize this information, strategies were grouped into three categories (a) school level, (b) preventive classroom level, and (c) consequential classroom level.

School Level Measures

Table 7 presents the data on school level methods for coping with aggression. These strategies incorporate consequences to

Table 7

School Level Methods Reported by Teachers for Coping with Aggression

Method	Total Percent Indicating Use
Encourage the use of medication	18
Referral to outside agency for counseling	44
Referral to school based counseling	66
Shortened school day	31
Homebound instruction	17
Alternative school placement	47
Ignored truancy	5
Suspension	
In-school	47
Out of school	
3 day limit	41
10 day limit	32
Consecutive suspensions for an indefinite period of time	11

students who exhibit aggressive behavior and reflect the school administration's dictates. In descending order the three most commonly reported strategies at the school level are referral to school based counseling (66 percent), alternative school placement (47 percent), and in-school suspension (47 percent). The least frequently noted school level method was ignored truancy (5 percent).

Respondents also volunteered that the following school level methods are used in some settings: parent contact, sending student home, police involvement, work duty around the school, and expulsion. Three teachers indicated that the administration of their school avoided all involvement with aggressive students thereby placing responsibility for action upon the teacher.

Preventive Classroom Level Measures

Preventive classroom level methods are those strategies used by teachers to reduce the incidence of aggression. Data from the Phase I questionnaire relative to preventive strategies at the classroom level are presented in Table 8. The use of classroom rules, posted guidelines for student behavior, were reported by 90 percent of the respondents. Rules were the most frequently noted preventive method used for physical aggression toward others (88 percent) and toward objects (74 percent) as well as for verbal aggression (87 percent). Some form of points earned for appropriate behaviors and exchanged for a reinforcer or reward is used by 85 percent of the teachers returning the survey. Cost response systems were indicated to be used by fewer individuals (70 percent). Token systems are apparently

Table 8

Classroom Level Methods Reported by Teachers for Coping with Types of Aggression

	Method	Total	Percentage Using Physical toward: Others	Self	Objects	Verbal
Preventive	Classroom rules	90	88	53	74	87
	Token or point system	85	78	62	67	78
	Cost response system	70	64	43	59	63
	Contracts	71	61	46	43	59
	Physical exercise program	30	29	23	20	23
	Cognitive-behavioral techniques	70	67	50	53	66
Consequential	Verbal reprimand	75	65	48	55	56
	Tension relief through humor	71	51	37	39	54
	Corporal punishment	34	31	5	15	23
	Time-out	88	84	37	64	70
	Overcorrection	75	36	14	71	22
	Mediation essay	25	17	9	16	22
	Removal to school office	74	71	25	39	41
	Physical restraint	72	71	40	34	17

the most widely used preventive strategy for self-abusive behaviors with 62 percent of the respondents indicating their use. The least frequently noted preventive classroom strategy was the use of a physical exercise program. Defined as consisting of structured physical activity on a regular basis such as running or walking, 30 percent of the responding teachers indicated its use.

A variety of additional preventive strategies in use were communicated via the completed questionnaire. These included structured class activities, use of films on coping with aggression, group therapy in the classroom with a trained therapist, affective education activities, "Fair Fight" techniques, and natural consequences.

Consequential Classroom Level Measures

Methods called upon by the teacher when confronted by an aggressive student are consequential classroom level strategies. The data on these techniques are compiled and presented in Table 8. Time-out was noted by 88 percent of the respondents. It was the most frequently noted method of coping with both physical aggression toward others (84 percent) and verbal aggression (70 percent). Verbal reprimands and overcorrection were each indicated to be used by 75 percent of the teachers replying to the questionnaire. The data indicate that overcorrection is used primarily as a consequence to aggression toward objects (71 percent) and is also apparently a major classroom consequence to this type of aggression. Verbal reprimands are the intervention most often noted by the respondents (48 percent) as used when dealing with physical aggression toward self.

Four additional reactions to aggressive actions of students were indicated among the responses to this section of the questionnaire. These were: requiring the student to run laps, changing the student's activity, physical proximity, and removal of other students to deprive the aggressor of an "audience."

Summary of Results

Phase I teachers' reports of student expressions of various types of aggressive student behavior ranged from a low of 73 percent (for physical aggression toward self) to a high of 97 percent (for verbal aggression). The data from Phase I also indicated only slight differences between the reported occurrence of both extreme and more moderate forms of aggression directed toward others (84 percent and 88 percent respectively). Physical aggression toward objects was reported to have been encountered by 94 percent of the Phase I teachers. Targets of physically aggressive acts toward others and verbal aggression were noted to have included teachers, aides, and students in the experience of the majority of respondents.

The extent of the various forms of aggression was determined through both Phase I and Phase II. Both consistencies and discrepancies were apparent among the data from these stages. For example, precisely equal percentages of Phase I and Phase II participants reported weekly occurrences of extreme physical aggression toward others (29 percent) and verbal aggression (92 percent). On the other hand there were notable differences between Phase I

(47 percent) and Phase II (64 percent) indications of weekly incidents of physical aggression toward objects. Differences between Phase I and Phase II reports of frequency rates were also noted for mild physical aggression toward others and physical aggression toward self. Rates of physical aggression toward objects were significantly higher in elementary level settings.

Eighty-four percent of Phase I teachers indicated confidence in their ability to cope with classroom aggression, and a significant relationship was found to exist between level of confidence and prior training in methods of coping with aggression. Eighty percent of the Phase I teachers indicated having been trained in such strategies, the majority (69 percent) receiving training through inservice sponsored by a school district. Notable numbers (86 percent) of Phase I teachers indicated a desire for additional training or initial training within the area of coping with classroom aggression.

Only one school level method of coping with aggression was reported by more than half the Phase I participants; referral to school based counseling was indicated by 66 percent of the teachers. The most commonly reported classroom level strategies include classroom rules (90 percent), token or point systems (85 percent), and time-out (88 percent). One of these is the predominant method of intervention noted for each type of aggressive behavior. The least frequently noted methods were physical exercise program (30 percent) and mediation essay (25 percent).

In summary, based upon these results it is obvious within the limitations of this study, that both physically and verbally aggressive student behaviors have been encountered by the majority of Florida, special education teachers working in settings serving EH students. Too, teachers are generally confident in their ability to cope with such behaviors. There is evidence to suggest this confidence arises at least in part from the training in methods of dealing with aggression 80 percent of these teachers have received. While data indicate large numbers of teachers rely upon such techniques as classroom rules, token systems, and time-out, a variety of other strategies are also used to combat the occurrence of aggression. Despite this expressed confidence and seemingly exhaustive list of interventions, 86 percent of the teachers participating in the study indicated a desire for additional training.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Over the past three decades indications of concern among professional educators, the public, students, and government officials regarding the commonplace incidence of disruptive and violent behavior in American schools have been evident. For example, in each "Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools" conducted since 1969, except one, "lack of discipline" has ranked high among major dilemmas confronting public schools. Complete volumes have been given over to the problem (Bybee & Gee, 1982; Stinchcombe, 1964; Walker, 1979) and the results of three large-scale investigations of school violence have been published (Bayh, 1975; National Education Association 1956; National Institute of Education, 1977). The latter resulted in data descriptive of the frequency, seriousness, and incidence of violence delineated by level of school, region of the country and community size. Additionally, factors highly correlated with violence in schools and a miscellany of strategies to prevent such acts have been identified. Despite the apparently exhaustive nature of this data, important information was omitted. These investigations dealt with serious crimes and incidents (Bell & Semmel, 1978), not with the daily

concerns of disobedience and disruptive, aggressive behavior confronting classroom teachers. Data specifically relative to the frequency and nature of aggression in settings where special education students are served has not been available.

Considering that in most classes, the regular classroom teacher can expect to have at least one very volatile, destructive or aggressive student (Kauffman, 1981) and that such a conduct disorder is most likely to be labeled deviant, resulting in the student's referral for special education services (Murray & Whittenberger, 1983), it may be deduced that the teacher of disordered children is confronted with substantial amounts of aggression. For example, a class action suit (Willie M. v. Hunt et al., 1979) was filed in North Carolina, for four specific complainants and all other violent assaultive children. Consequent to this suit 986 children of school age were identified and certified as members of the Willie M. class as of November 15, 1982 (Carroll, 1982). Of these, 460 were recipients of educational services provided through public schools. The primary handicapping condition for the greatest number of these assaultive youth, 235, was seriously emotionally handicapped. Sixty-four class members were reported to exhibit violent assaultive behaviors only at home and in the community, not at school (J. M. Carroll, personal communication, February 25, 1983).

Realistically, teachers of these violent, assaultive youth are not unaffected by aggressive behaviors their students emit. One wonders what is the nature of student aggression confronting special

education of teachers of emotionally handicapped students and how frequently such situations arise? What is the impact? Teacher preparation institutions have not dealt with training teachers to effectively cope with classroom aggression (Bell & Semmel, 1978) and teacher trainers in the area of emotional handicaps cannot agree on related teacher competencies (Wood, 1979). How then is aggression being handled? Are teachers receiving relevant training? The answers to these questions have relevance for the content and context of pre-service and inservice teacher training.

Summary

Purpose

The purpose of the current study was to illustrate the nature, extent, and impact of aggression in special education settings for emotionally handicapped (EH) students within the Florida public schools. To assist the development of a more comprehensive picture, three questions were addressed.

1. What is the nature and extent of aggression as it occurs in settings where emotionally handicapped students are served?

2. What is the nature and extent of the teachers' training in methods for coping with aggression in settings where emotionally handicapped students are served?

3. What are common consequences and/or methods used to deal with aggressive behaviors exhibited in settings where emotionally handicapped students are served?

Method

Direction for the study was derived largely from a review of the professional literature. The aggression characteristic of EH students, a paucity of identifiable specific teacher training practices for coping with aggressive students, and the type of interventions employed in settings serving EH children substantiated the need for information depicting the extent of aggression in exceptional education environments in which EH students are served. Despite the availability of a small number of investigations of related concerns (e.g., violence and vandalism in public schools in general, the efficacy of various, individual interventions) (Bayh, 1975; National Education Association, 1956; National Institute of Education, 1977) a complete picture of the nature, extent, and classroom correlates of aggression in settings where EH students are served was not to be found; the type of data necessary to conduct an experimental study was not available. Consequently, a nonexperimental research design seemed warranted as the most efficient means of developing a foundation upon which to base future studies. The methods selected for gathering data for the current study were survey and in-classroom frequency counts, conducted in Phase I and Phase II respectively.

Participants. Individuals were identified for potential participation in the study through a stratified random sampling procedure. The target population was all teachers in Florida public school settings serving EH students. A list of Florida's 67 school districts with a breakdown based on student population was used to divide districts into categories of small (less than 10,000), medium (10,000 to 35,000), and large (over 35,000). Six districts were

selected randomly from each category and the director of special education services for each district was contacted. Each was requested to cooperate with the study by identifying his or her district's teachers of EH students. Ten directors responded. Of these, one district's director communicated an inability to comply within the proposed timeframe. However, nine directors representing a proportionate number of small, medium, and large districts within the state of Florida, were able to cooperate. A total of 311 teachers were identified through this process, contacted for participation in both phases of the study, and offered one chance to win a mini-professional library for completion of the Phase I questionnaire. One hundred and seventy-eight teachers participated in Phase I (a response rate of 57 percent) and 75 of these same teachers participated in Phase II. A chi-square test of significance was used to analyze the similarities between participants in the two phases. One significant difference was found using a .05 level of confidence. School district size was an area of significant dissimilarity of proportionate representation of the two groups.

Phase I questionnaire. The primary goal of Phase I was to collect information using a questionnaire covering four areas of interest: teachers' perceptions of the nature and frequency of aggression in settings serving EH students in which they had taught, information on training of teachers of EH students in methods of dealing with classroom aggression, interventions used for coping with aggression, and demographic data of the sample. A four page questionnaire was developed. Each page of the form focused on one of these four areas.

For the study, aggression was delineated into the categories of physical aggression (toward others, toward self, toward objects) and verbal aggression. Information sought in Phase I relative to incidents of aggression in settings where EH students are served encompassed teachers' perceptions of the frequency of occurrence of each type and, where applicable, the target of the aggressive act.

The section of the questionnaire relative to teacher training in methods of coping with aggressive student behavior included questions on source (university or workshop), length, mode of presentation (lecture, demonstration, practice) and content as experienced by teachers in the sample. Inquiry as to confidence in dealing with aggressive students and desire for additional or first time training was also pursued.

The focus of the third part of the questionnaire was preventive techniques and interventions used for coping with aggressive students. Based on the professional literature strategies were divided into school-based and classroom-based categories. School-based level methods included medication, counseling, shortened school day, homebound or alternate school placement, ignored truancy, and suspension. Rules, token and cost response systems, contracts, physical exercise programs, and cognitive behavioral modification were options under preventive classroom strategies. Methods relied upon by teachers once confronted with aggression included verbal reprimand, tension release through humor, corporal punishment, timeout, overcorrection, mediation essay, removal to school office, and physical restraint.

Prior to dissemination in the study, the four page questionnaire was submitted to a panel of experts in the area of exceptional student education. It was then field tested with teachers of emotionally handicapped students as a final check on format and content.

Phase II observation form. The object of the second phase of the study was to obtain, from teachers of EH students, a frequency count of incidents perceived by them to be within the classifications of aggression previously identified on the Phase I questionnaire. The one page form was a simple 5 X 5 grid with types of aggression as the rows and days of the observation period as the columns.

Design. The teachers identified through district directors of special education were individually contacted by mail in late August of 1983. Each teacher was sent a questionnaire accompanied by information on the study's purpose and Phase II, and a raffle ticket for a mini-professional library. Participation in the second phase of the study was also requested at this time. The initial response rate was 41 percent. A follow-up letter and additional questionnaire were mailed to those individuals not responding by mid-September. A total of 178 individuals returned completed questionnaires bringing the total response rate to an acceptable level of 57 percent for Phase I.

One hundred-four individuals participating in Phase I and providing return addresses elected to participate in Phase II and were subsequently mailed an observation form, instructions, and a note

of appreciation in late September. On the final day of scheduled observations, participants were mailed a postcard reminding them to submit observation forms. Of these individuals, 75 actually conducted frequency counts for a period of one school week (five days) and returned the observation forms. In 16 percent of the settings observation was also conducted for a two-hour period by a trained outside observer to substantiate the congruence of teacher-reported frequency counts. Interobserver agreement rates of between 80 percent and 87 percent were established between the outside observers and teachers in settings by those outside observers.

Limitations. This study was limited by certain conditions beyond the control of the researcher. The cooperation of educational personnel at the school district and individual classroom level was necessary for completion of the work, it was not always available. It is possible that the attitudes of individuals not electing to participate in either or both phases of the study differ significantly from the attitudes of those persons choosing to participate. Another limitation may be the reluctance of many individuals to provide information on what is interpreted by them to be a "sensitive subject." The results of the Phase II observation are representative only of those settings in which the observations occurred and not in others. No claims to similarity with other classrooms are made. The study was restricted to the use of mailed questionnaires and self-report frequency counts provided by teachers. The differential effects these techniques (as opposed to direct classroom observation by outside observers in every setting) may have on the participants was not targeted for examination. The use of a single school week

which fell within the opening months of the school year during the observation phase constitutes a final limitation of the work. Some forms of aggression may occur only occasionally and the frequency of aggressive incidents may fluctuate across the course of the school year as affected by naturally occurring events (e.g., the full moon, days prior to and immediately following holidays). In summary, the results of both phases of the study are considered representative of similar public school settings in which EH students are served and in which the teacher volunteered to comply with study requests, caution should be used in generalizing to other settings.

Results

Data from Phase I and Phase II are combined where appropriate and presented here in sections corresponding to the three questions guiding the study. The three sections are the phenomenon of aggression, teacher training in coping with aggression, and methods of dealing with aggression.

The phenomenon of aggression. Data from the Phase I questionnaire provide an illustration of the participating teachers perceptions of the nature, extent and impact of aggression in settings serving EH students. In descending order the most frequently reported types of aggression experienced by the teachers are verbal aggression (97 percent), physical aggression toward objects (94 percent), mild forms of physical aggression toward others (88 percent), extreme forms of physical aggression toward others (94 percent), and lastly, physical aggression toward self (73 percent). Acts of physical and verbal aggression were largely thought to be directed toward teachers, aides, and students alike, although about one-third of Phase I teachers

reported that acts of physical aggression toward others were directed solely toward students. Sixty-eight percent of the teachers reporting incidents of verbal aggression indicated that such behavior was a daily event. A minimum of twice a month occurrences of physical aggression toward objects and mild physical aggression toward others was reported by 70 percent and 58 percent respectively of the Phase I teachers reporting such incidents. Over half (56 percent) the individuals specifying experiences with extreme forms of physical aggression indicated that these incidents occurred at least once a month with 29 percent reporting their occurrence on a weekly basis. Incidents of physical aggression toward self reportedly are encountered at least once a month by 60 percent of the 178 Phase I participants acknowledging such episodes.

Analysis of Phase II observation data resulted in identification of similarities and differences between these and Phase I reported rates of various types of aggression. For example, identical percentages of Phase I and Phase II participants noted weekly incidents of both extreme physical aggression toward others (29 percent) and verbal aggression (92 percent). Differences were evident in perceived and observed rates of mild physical aggression toward others, physical aggression toward self, and physical aggression toward objects. Phase I and Phase II respective rates for each of these latter three categories were as follows: 34 percent and 63 percent; 34 percent and 24 percent; and 47 percent and 64 percent.

Multiple analyses were conducted using chi-square to determine the relationship, if any, between various demographic variables and

rates (both perceived and observed) of the five categories of aggression. Only one significant ($p < .05$) relationship was apparent. The frequency of incidents of physical aggression toward objects is significantly related to grade level of the classroom. Incidents of this type occur with somewhat greater frequency in elementary settings as contrasted with non-elementary settings.

The majority of Phase I participants (84 percent) indicated feeling confident in their ability to cope with incidents of aggression; hen they were encountered. Of these 80 percent had experienced some type of specific training in methods of coping with aggression in the classroom. The results of an analysis performed using chi-square indicated a significant ($p < .05$) relationship between training and level of confidence; trained individuals were more likely to be confident than were untrained individuals.

Teacher training in coping with aggression. Eighty percent of the Phase I teachers had received training in techniques for dealing with aggression. The majority (69 percent) had been trained through school system sponsored inservice with some having received instruction as part of their undergraduate (31 percent) and/or graduate (35 percent) coursework.

The most frequently included content of training was preventive classroom strategies (83 percent) followed by nonaggressive physical restraint (78 percent). The least often noted component was methods of breaking up a fight (50 percent).

One hundred twenty-one (68 percent) of the 178 Phase I teachers indicated a desire for refresher training or training in methods of

coping with aggression, and 32 (18 percent) wanted initial training. A majority of both the trained and untrained groups of teachers indicated an interest in the following components: preventive classroom strategies, methods of approaching an aggressive student, nonaggressive physical restraint, methods of breaking up a fight, and other physical intervention techniques. Respondents added to the list of options for training cited on the survey form. Among their additions were dealing with verbally aggressive and passive aggressive behaviors, the use of seclusion, moving a student to time-out, setting up a classroom to prevent aggression, team restraints, dealing with self-abusive students, and cognitive behavioral strategies.

In response to a question specifically asking for a respondent's opinion on the need for training teachers of EH students in dealing with aggressive behavior, 99 percent of the 178 teachers indicated that EH teachers should have such training. Some respondents graphically emphasized their affirmative responses with underlining, circles, or stars and exclamation marks.

Methods of dealing with aggression. Strategies frequently used as preventive measures or in response to incidents of aggression were identified through the Phase I observation form. The most frequently reported methods used at the school level were referral to school based counseling (66 percent), and in-school suspension (47 percent). Three teachers responding to the Phase I questionnaire wrote comments on the returned forms indicating that the administration of their school avoided all involvement with aggressive students thereby placing responsibility for action upon the teacher. Classroom rules

(90 percent), time-out (88 percent), and token or point systems (85 percent) were the most often indicated strategies at the classroom level. The highest percentages of respondents indicated that they used classroom rules as a preventive strategy for physical aggression toward others (88 percent), verbal aggression (87 percent), and physical aggression toward objects (74 percent). Token or point systems were indicated to be used as a preventive strategy for physical aggression toward self by 62 percent of the Phase I participants. The most frequently indicated consequence to physical aggression toward others (84 percent) and verbal aggression (70 percent) was time-out. Verbal reprimands received the highest number of indicators (47 percent) among the consequences for self-abuse and overcorrection was noted by 71 percent of the Phase I respondents for physical aggression toward objects.

Additional classroom level strategies were noted by some respondents. Among others, these included structured class activities, use of films on coping with aggression, affective education activities, physical proximity, and removal of other students to deprive the aggressor of an "audience."

Discussion

The characteristics of emotionally handicapped students and the paucity of identifiable specific teacher training practices for working with aggressive students supported the need for information illustrating the nature and extent of aggression in special education

settings in which EH students are served. Comprehensive information on this particular area did not exist despite the existence of a few investigations of related areas and the type of information that would direct an experimental study was not evident in the professional literature. Consequently a nonexperimental research design was the most efficient method of building a knowledge base upon which to build future studies.

A combination of questionnaire and observation strategies was employed to address the primary questions of interest. Considering the problems associated with such methodologies the design of the present study proved effective in eliciting an acceptable level of voluntary participation and observer agreement. For example, specifically related to the return rates of questionaires and observation forms the use of raffle tickets, notes of appreciation, and post card reminders appear to have been positive factors. Conversely, relying upon individuals at the district level to actively support the research by providing specific teachers' names was a problem for which this researcher presently has no alternative solution. Additionally, perhaps the response rate may have been higher had more time for responses been allowed or if one additional follow-up letter had been incorporated into the design. The research results are however considered to be valid within the limitations of the study noted earlier and discussion of these results follows.

Data derived from the questionnaires and observations give credence to the suggestion of professionals in the field (Kauffman, 1981; Murray

& Whittenberger, 1983) that incidents of student aggression in EH classrooms are present and noticably frequent. The results of Phase I clearly indicate that it is the perception of a large majority of the participants in this study that verbal aggression and various types of physical aggression in settings where EH students are served are not uncommon. In fact three-fourths of these participants, all teachers in such settings, anticipate daily occurrences of verbal aggression and one-third may encounter some form of physical aggression toward others and/or objects on a weekly basis. Student physical aggression toward self generally occurs more infrequently but has been experienced by three-quarters of the teachers at some point in their teaching career with a degree of regularity.

Even though there were some obvious similarities and dissimilarities between teachers' perceptions and observations of frequency of aggressive incidents, Phase II data also supports professionals' contentions that aggression in settings where EH students are served is commonplace. It may be surmised that the impact the various forms of aggression have on teachers or even a commonly taught teacher used intervention at least partially account for both the agreements and disagreements between teachers' perceptions and observations of frequency rates. In the case of extreme physical aggression toward others in which the percentage of teachers perceiving weekly incidents was identical to the percentage of teachers observing such acts in one week, these acts may be so noxious as to remain within a teacher's memory and are thus more accurately recalled. Impact may also account for teachers' perceptions of higher frequencies of student aggression toward self when

compared with recorded frequencies. Self-mutilation may be so offensive to teachers that these acts appear to occur more frequently. However, milder forms of physically aggressive behavior may have only a passing effect and consequently are perceived to occur at a reduced rate. Another possible explanation for the discrepancies between perceived and observed rates, especially for mild physical aggression toward objects, may be found in the use of an intervention that is commonly taught to educators (i.e., ignoring). For example, teachers may have become highly skillful at ignoring mild forms of aggression and as a result tune them out. When asked to record such events, however, teachers are required to acknowledge them on a structured form resulting in higher recorded rates than perceived rates. Also, the consequences of more extreme physical aggression directed toward others preclude such strategies as ignoring.

Considering the nature and extent of aggression in settings serving EH students in which the study's participants have worked and the seemingly minimal degree of administrative involvement, indicated by the reported low percentages of school level interventions and additional teacher comments, it is with some curiosity that one notices 49 percent of these individuals have continued to work in these settings for at least five years. Perhaps part of the reason these teachers have endured is related to the training they have received which has helped them maintain confidence in their ability to cope. The affirmation by 99 percent of these professionals of the need for training all teachers of EH students coupled with the significant

relationship between training and level of confidence adds support to this conclusion.

Bell and Semmel (1978) have noted that teachers in general are not trained during their preservice courses to cope with aggression and data from this study substantiates this to some extent. If indeed school systems are the primary provider of teacher training in methods of coping with classroom incidents of aggression as the present study indicates, then it appears that teacher preparation institutions which offer courses in teaching EH students should perhaps evaluate the efficacy of the content of these classes. Few teachers, remembering their own experience as a first year teacher, would disagree with the idea that the first year in the classroom is both exciting and anxiety provoking. The better prepared one is to deal with a day's events the more likely one is to remain calm and act in a manner which will improve rather than exacerbate a tenuous situation. The inclusion of instruction in practical, specific means of preventing and responding to incidents of aggression would be expected to benefit both the classroom teacher and the student. Another reason for providing such training to teachers can be found in a note written on the Phase I questionnaire. The note indicated that, in the perception of the author, the administration of the school avoided working with aggressive students and assigned all responsibility for dealing with them to the teacher. Similar remarks were added to forms submitted by two other teachers. It is obvious that teachers in these situations need a wide repertoire of preventive and intervening strategies which can be relied upon for effectiveness.

Another thought communicated by a Phase I respondent was that although she had received what she considered to be very good training in effective physical intervention techniques, she was no longer permitted to use them. Also, it has been the experience of the researcher that one acronym is commonly used to describe often very diverse intervention techniques (e.g., offensive strategies and defensive strategies) and professionals are quite possibly miscommunicating about what are and are not acceptable methods of intervention. These thoughts raise what is perhaps the most important implication arising from this study; that is, there is a need to develop, validate, and systematize physical intervention strategies which are both effective and safe for students and teachers. Ideally a task force of teachers, administrators, parents, and teacher trainers would be formed to develop such strategies, create a set of consistent vocabulary, and investigate legal implications and formulate policy. One qualification for being on the task force would be direct experience working with EH children and youth. It would be the responsibility of this group to research existing techniques and, where necessary, develop new ones. A comprehensive training program for Florida's teachers of EH students which includes both preventive measures and action to take when confronted with a physically aggressive student would be the task force goal.

An additional implication for training is evident. Training of school administrators in methods of coping with student aggression and for supporting teachers who commonly encounter aggressive students

appears indicated. Such specialized training may ultimately result in reduced teacher burn-out and in a decrease in incidents of student aggression through greater consistency of administrative follow-through and support.

Finally, much additional research, of a similar nature, appears warranted to further build a knowledge base for experimental studies. Similar studies might be undertaken in settings where exceptionalities of students other than EH are served and in regular classrooms to compare rates across settings. Additionally a national study could be justified in order to develop a more generalized profile of aggression, relevant teacher training practices, and strategies in common use. Although costly, the use of outside observers to collect classroom data on incidents of aggression, antecedants, and consequences may greatly enhance the validity of subsequent research results and provide insight into classroom etiologies and interventions. Research on new and existing interventions and their applicability to the aggressive student is also implicated as is a study directed toward school administrators and the need for specific training for coping with student aggression and teacher support.

Aggression in educational settings is a sensitive topic. However, from the present study, prior investigations, and the conclusions of experts in the field it is obviously present in regular and EH classroom settings. It is neither practical nor realistic particularly in the case of physical aggression, to ignore it in the hope it will go away. The need for additional research and for positive action by teacher trainers in this area is apparent and critical.

APPENDIX A

FLORIDA DEFINITION OF EMOTIONALLY HANDICAPPED

Emotionally handicapped student is one who after receiving supportive educational assistance and counseling services available to all students, still exhibits persistent and consistent severe behavioral disabilities which consequently disrupt the student's own learning process. This is the student whose inability to achieve adequate academic progress or satisfactory interpersonal relationships cannot be attributed primarily to physical, sensory or intellectual deficits. The term does not include children who are socially maladjusted unless it is determined that they are emotionally handicapped. (State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.3016)

Note: For funding purposes, EH students in Florida are classified as emotionally handicapped or severely emotionally disturbed. The latter category consists of those students who, having been identified as emotionally handicapped, require placement in a special full-time class in a regular school, or in a program in a special school, and for whom a special program and extensive supportive services are required (D. Wells, personal communication, July 7, 1983).

APPENDIX B

DEFINITIONS OF EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE

Impairment of emotional growth during some stage of development with resultant distrust toward self and others and hostility generated from anxiety. (Moustakas, 1953, p. 19)

Disorders that consist of inadequate or inappropriate behavior that is learned and can therefore be changed through application of learning procedures. (Dupont, 1969, p. 6)

Behavioral disabilities are defined as a variety of excessive, chronic, deviant behaviors ranging from impulsive and aggressive acts to depression and withdrawl acts (1) which violate the perceiver's expectations of appropriateness and (2) which the perceiver wishes to see stopped. (Graubard, 1973, p. 246)

The behavioral disordered child is defined as a child whose behavior within the educational situation may be discordant in his relationships with others and/or whose academic achievement may be impaired due to an inability to learn utilizing the presented teaching techniques. The child's current behavior manifests either an extreme or a persistent failure to adapt and function intellectually, emotionally, or socially at a level commensurate with his or her chronological age. (McDowell, 1975, p. 2)

Seriously emotionally disturbed is defined as follows:

(i) The term means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, which adversely affects educational performance.
   (a) An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, and health factors;
   (b) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
   (c) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
   (d) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or
   (e) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

(ii) The term includes children who are schizophrenic or autistic. The term does not include children who are socially maladjusted unless it is determined that they are seriously emotionally disturbed. (Federal Register, Vol. 42, No. 163, August 23, 1977, p. 42478)

Emotional disturbance is a state of being marked by abberations in an individual's feelings about him- or herself and the environment. The existence of emotional disturbance is inferred from behavior. Generally, if a person acts in a manner that is detrimental to him- or herself and/or others, he or she may be considered in a state of emotional disturbance. (Newcomer, 1980, p. 6-7)

APPENDIX C

COVER LETTER TO DISTRICT DIRECTORS
OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

University of Florida
Gainesville, Fla. 32611

Dear

As part of a research project in special education at the University of Florida a study is being conducted to determine the nature and extent of aggressive behavior of students served in settings for the emotionally handicapped and to determine what are the current methods used in public schools for decreasing and coping with aggressive student actions in Florida. The primary source of information will be teachers of emotionally handicapped students. The study will result in information which will assist planning of content of future teacher training at both preservice and inservice levels in an area of concern to students, parents, teachers, and administrators. A more detailed description of the study is enclosed for your additional information.

You are being requested to cooperate with this study by providing us with information necessary to contact teachers of emotionally handicapped and/or seriously emotionally disturbed students no later than August 10, 1983. The enclosed form describes a number of options which would meet our needs. A postage-paid envelope for submitting this information is enclosed for your convenience.

We believe strongly in the relevance and importance of this study. Your participation is a crucial factor to the validity of the project and your cooperation is sincerely sought. It is important that you understand, however, that your cooperation is voluntary and that you have the right not to submit the requested information. Every step possible to insure that the data collection be conducted with little or no disruption to the normal teaching routine has been taken. The success of the study is largely dependent upon your participation in this project. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact either of us at (904) 392-0755, 622-0701 (Suncom), or through SPECIALNET User Name UF.SE.

We very much appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Kathy L. Ruhl
Study Coordinator

Bob Algozzine, Ph.D.
Professor of Special Education

KLR/lrc

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

APPENDIX D

DISTRICT DIRECTOR REPLY FORM

In order to cooperate with this study, please provide ONE of the sets of information listed below by mailing it to the study coordinator in the enclosed, postage-paid envelope by August 10, 1983. Please include information on teachers or settings in each of the following categories: emotionally handicapped and/or seriously emotionally disturbed CATEGORICAL or VARYING EXCEPTIONALITY (which include EH/SED) RESOURCE and SELF-CONTAINED CLASSROOMS, HOMEBOUND, HOSPITAL or MENTAL HEALTH facility, and EH/SED self-contained SPECIAL SCHOOL. The information may be compiled and returned in any ONE of the following formats:

(1) A computer printout of all teachers employed by your school district who teach in settings serving emotionally handicapped and/or seriously emotionally disturbed students. The list should contain each teacher's name and business or home mailing address.

(2) A copy of your district's current personnel directory in which the names of all teachers employed by your school district who teach in settings serving EH and/or SED students have been circled.

(3) A completed form such as the one included below (you may use the actual form using additional pages where necessary) being sure to include all teachers employed by your school district who teach in settings serving EH/SED students OR all settings in your district in which EH/SED students are served.

TEACHER'S NAME OR SETTING/SCHOOL NAME*	MAILING ADDRESS	*IF SCHOOL NAME, THEN NUMBER OF TEACHERS SERVING EH/SED STUDENTS AT SETTING

APPENDIX E

INFORMATION SHEET

INFORMATION SHEET

The Nature and Extent of Aggression in Settings Serving Emotionally Handicapped Students

A study to determine the nature and extent of aggression in settings serving emotionally handicapped students and the current means of preventing and intervening with aggressive behaviors in these settings is being conducted through the Department of Special Education at the University of Florida. Dede Wells, consultant for the Emotionally Handicapped, Bureau for the Education of Exceptional Students, Division of Public Schools, Florida Department of Education, has endorsed the study. Information is sought from teachers of self-contained, resource, homebound, or hospital settings in which the teacher is employed by a public school district in the state of Florida. It is anticipated that teachers of emotionally handicapped (EH) and/or seriously emotionally disturbed (SED) students from three randomly selected school districts will participate.

Phase I of the study will be conducted during September of 1983. Teachers participating in this phase will receive a mail questionnaire soliciting their perceptions of the nature and extent of aggression as it occurs in settings serving EH/SED students, teacher training in methods of coping with aggression in educational settings, and current practice relevant to aggressive EH/SED students. It is anticipated, based on field test experience, that the time required to complete the questionnaire will be between 15 and 20 minutes. Additionally during Phase I, participation in Phase II of this study will be sought. The questionnaire and response to the request to participate in Phase II will be collected by mail with extensive follow-up by mail or SPECIALNET to those teachers not responding to the initial mailouts.

Phase II will be conducted during October of 1983 and involves those teachers from Phase I volunteering to participate in the second phase. These teachers will be requested to conduct frequency counts of specified aggressive behaviors that occur during a one week observation period and to submit the results to the project coordinator. A small sample of these teachers will be visited by a member of the research field staff who will conduct a brief observation concurrent to the one being conducted by the teacher for the purpose of establishing observer reliability.

Results provided by the study will be descriptive. The information will be used to show the perceived and observed incidence rates for various types of aggressive behavior together with three levels of schooling (elementary, junior high, and senior high) and three types of Florida school districts (small, medium, and large). There will also be breakdowns of characteristics of the teacher and setting, with emphasis on kinds of prevention and intervention methods in use.

APPENDIX F

PHASE I QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: Please indicate your response to each question by placing an "X" in the appropriate space. The numbers and letters shown in parentheses beside answer categories should be ignored; they are included only to assist the processing of your answers. ALL QUESTIONS REFER TO *YOUR EXPERIENCE* AS A TEACHER OF EMOTIONALLY HANDICAPPED STUDENTS.

1. (PA1) Have incidents of extreme physical aggression toward others (attacking or attempting to attack another person with sufficient force to potentially inflict serious physical harm; hitting, choking, headlock, etc.) occurred?

( ) Yes ( ) No

1:1 (PA1P) Have these attacks ever been directed toward (indicate each that is appropriate):
( ) the teacher or aide
( ) another student

1:2 (PA1F) Would you say that acts of this type most commonly occur (select one):

( ) Daily	( ) Weekly	( ) Monthly	( ) Yearly
( ) 1-3 times	( ) 1-2 times	( ) once	( ) 1-3 times
( ) 4 or more	( ) 3-4 times	( ) 2-3 times	( ) 4-7 times

2. (PA2) Have incidents of physical aggression toward others (attacking or attempting to attack another person with sufficient force to potentially inflict pain; biting, scratching, hairpulling, etc.) occurred?

( ) Yes ( ) No

2:1 (PA2P) Have these attacks ever been directed toward (indicate each that is appropriate):
( ) the teacher or aide
( ) another student

2:2 (PA2F) Would you say that acts of this type most commonly occur (select one):

( ) Daily	( ) Weekly	( ) Monthly	( ) Yearly
( ) 1-3 times	( ) 1-2 times	( ) once	( ) 1-3 times
( ) 4 or more	( ) 3-4 times	( ) 2-3 times	( ) 4-7 times

3. (PA3) Have incidents of physical aggression toward self (self-mutilation or battering; cutting, biting, head-banging, scratching, etc) occurred?

( ) Yes ( ) No

3:1 (PA3F) Would you say that acts of this type most commonly occur (select one):

( ) Daily	( ) Weekly	( ) Monthly	( ) Yearly
( ) 1-3 times	( ) 1-2 times	( ) once	( ) 1-3 times
( ) 4 or more	( ) 3-4 times	( ) 2-3 times	( ) 4-7 times

4. (PA4) Have incidents of physical aggression toward inanimate objects (destruction of, or damage to any object) occurred?

( ) Yes ( ) No

3:1 (PA3F) Would you say that acts of this type most commonly occur (select one):

( ) Daily	( ) Weekly	( ) Monthly	( ) Yearly
( ) 1-3 times	( ) 1-2 times	( ) once	( ) 1-3 times
( ) 4 or more	( ) 3-4 times	( ) 2-3 times	( ) 4-7 times

5. (VA1) Have incidents of verbal aggression, NOT accompanied by any of the other four types of aggression (the use of vocabulary defined as instigative by the observer: negativism, verbiage resulting in anxiety, or disruption of activity of the person who is the target of the teasing; slurring, commenting in a whining, nasal, or falsetto voice and/or poking fun at or intentionally embarrassing another; bullying, commanding another to act in a given manner immediately, while threatening negative consequences for noncompliance) occurred?

( ) Yes ( ) No

5:1 (VA1P) Have these attacks ever been directed toward (indicate each that is appropriate):
( ) the teacher or aide
( ) another student

5:2 (VA1F) Would you say that these acts most commonly occur (select one):

( ) Hourly	( ) Daily	( ) Weekly	( ) Monthly
( ) 1-3 times	( ) 1-3 times	( ) once	( ) once
( ) 4 or more	( ) 4 or more	( ) 2-4 times	( ) 2-3 times

6. (CF1) Do you feel confident in your ability to deal with incidents of classroom aggression?
( ) Yes ( ) No

7. (T) Have you had training in specific methods for dealing with aggressive situations in the classroom?
( ) Yes ( ) No

Please describe that training.

7:11 (T11) Setting:

( ) Part of a college course
( ) undergraduate
( ) graduate
( ) Inservice provided by school system
( ) Workshop offered to anyone provided by an organization or state agency

7:12 (T13) Duration:

( ) 1-2 hours ( ) 3-4 hours
( ) 5-8 hours ( ) 9-12 hours

7:13 (T13) Type:

( ) Lecture and demonstration
( ) Lecture, demonstration, and practice

7:14 (T14) Please indicate which of the following components were included in that training (mark as many as are appropriate):

( ) Nonaggressive physical restraint
( ) Aggressive physical restraint
( ) Methods of escaping a student hold (arm grabs, choke, hairpull, etc.)
( ) Methods of deflecting student attack
( ) Methods of approaching an aggressive student
( ) Methods of breaking up a fight
( ) Preventive classroom strategies
( ) Other (please specify)_____

7:15 (T15) Would you be interested in additional training?

( ) No ( ) Yes

7:21 (T21) Would you be interested in such training?

( ) Yes
( ) No
( ) Maybe

7:31 (T31) Please indicate which of the following components would be of interest to you (mark as many as are appropriate):

( ) Nonaggressive physical restraint
( ) Aggressive physical restraint
( ) Methods of escaping a student hold (arm grabs, choke, hairpull, etc)
( ) Methods of deflecting student attack
( ) Methods of approaching an aggressive student
( ) Methods of breaking up a fight
( ) Preventive classroom strategies
( ) Other (please specify)_____

8. (C1) Which of the following are consequences to students who exhibit aggressive behavior in the school (these will reflect the strategies utilized by the administration of your school) (mark all that apply):

( ) Encourage the use of medication
( ) Referral to outside agency for counseling
( ) Referral to school based counseling
( ) Shortened school day
( ) Homebound instruction
( ) Alternative school placement
( ) Ignored truancy
( ) Suspension →
( ) Other (please specify)_____

( ) In-school
( ) Out of school
  ( ) 3-day limit
  ( ) 10-day limit
  ( ) consecutive suspensions for an indefinite period of time

9. (C2) Which of the following preventive strategies do you use in your teaching to reduce the incidence of aggression? *(Please indicate for which types of aggressive behaviors also)*

	Physical aggression toward: Others	Self	Objects	Verbal Aggression
( ) Classroom rules (posted guidelines for student behavior) →	( )	( )	( )	( )
( ) Token or point system (points earned for appropriate behaviors and exchanged for reinforcer/reward) →	( )	( )	( )	( )
( ) Cost response system (points or privileges withdrawn for inappropriate behavior) →	( )	( )	( )	( )
( ) Contracts (written agreement between teacher and student specifying what each will do) →	( )	( )	( )	( )
( ) Physical exercise program (structured physical activity on a regular basis; e.g. running, walking, weight training) →	( )	( )	( )	( )
( ) Cognitive-behavioral techniques (direct teaching of alternative coping responses; e.g. self-control training or problem-solving) →	( )	( )	( )	( )
( ) Other (please specify) _____				

10. (C3) Which of the following strategies do you use in your teaching when confronted by an aggressive student? *(Please indicate for which types of aggressive behaviors also)*

	Physical aggression toward: Others	Self	Objects	Verbal Aggression
( ) Verbal reprimand ("Stop that!") →	( )	( )	( )	( )
( ) Tension relief through humor (kidding the student out of a tense situation) →	( )	( )	( )	( )
( ) Corporal punishment (paddling, spanking) →	( )	( )	( )	( )
( ) Time-out (removal of student from reinforcing situation through physical isolation from other students) →	( )	( )	( )	( )
( ) Overcorrection (requiring student to restore damaged surroundings to proper state or requiring student to make restitution) →	( )	( )	( )	( )
( ) Mediation essay (student copies predetermined dialogue addressing specific problem behavior) →	( )	( )	( )	( )
( ) Removal to school office (student sent to principal or counselor) →	( )	( )	( )	( )
( ) Physical restraint (restraining student from physical aggression) →	( )	( )	( )	( )
( ) Other (please specify)_____				

11. (01)Do you believe that teachers of emotionally handicapped students should have training in dealing with aggressive behavior in the classroom?

( ) Yes ( ) No

12. Please provide the following information about yourself and your *current* situation:

12:1 (D1) Sex: ( ) Male ( ) Female

12:2 (D2) Age: ( ) 21-24 ( ) 25-30 ( ) 31-34
( ) 35-40 ( ) 41-48 ( ) 49+

12:3 (D3) Highest level of professional preparation:
( ) Bachelor's ( ) Master's ( ) Specialist ( ) Doctorate

12:4 (D4) Number of years experience as a teacher of emotionally handicapped students:
( ) first year ( ) 1 year ( ) 2 years ( ) 3-4 years
( ) 5-6 years ( ) 7-9 years ( ) 10 or more

12:5 (D5) Service delivery model of your current classroom:
( ) Self-contained ( ) Resource ( ) Homebound ( ) Special School
( ) Hospital or Mental Health Class

12:6 (D6) Classification of current classroom (select one):
( ) Emotionally handicapped (or related category, but not seriously emotionally disturbed)
( ) Seriously emotionally disturbed
( ) Combination emotionally handicapped and seriously emotionally disturbed
( ) Cross-categorical (emotionally handicapped, learning disabled, mentally handicapped)
( ) Combination classroom serving emotionally handicapped and learning disabled
( ) Combination classroom serving emotionally handicapped and mentally handicapped
( ) Other (please specify) _____

12:7 (D7) Grade level(s) current classroom (check all that apply):
( ) 1-5 ( ) 6 ( ) 7-8 ( ) 9 ( ) 10-12

12:8 (D8) Do you currently have an aide?
( ) Yes ( ) No

Thank you for your participation in the first phase of this study.

Would you be willing to participate in Phase II of this study as described in the paper accompanying this form?

( ) Yes ( ) No **Signature**_____

Would you be willing to have a member of the field research team spend one half-day recording aggressive student behaviors during the week you are conducting the frequency count?

( ) Yes ( ) No

If address label is incorrect, please complete here: _____

APPENDIX G

FIELD TEST FEEDBACK FORM

This is a pilot study on the attached questionnaire form. Your answers will be analyzed as group data for the purpose of improving the form. No individual response will be used. Thank you very much for your assistance with this project.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Complete the attached questionnaire.

2. Complete the following questions relevant to your reactions to the form:

   1) Approximately how long did it take you to complete the form?

      ( ) 15 minutes or less ( ) 20 minutes or less

      ( ) 25 minutes ( ) 30 minutes or more

   2) Did you find the arrows used on the form to be (select one):

      ( ) helpful ( ) distracting ( ) confusing

   3) Did you find the numbers and letters in parentheses beside answer categories (eg. PA1, PA3F) confusing?

      ( ) yes ( ) no

      Comment: _____

      _____

   4) Did you understand the definitions for the following terms:

	Yes	No
Extreme physical aggression	( )	( )
Physical aggression toward others	( )	( )
Physical aggression toward self	( )	( )
Physical aggression toward inanimate objects	( )	( )
Verbal aggression	( )	( )
Classroom rules	( )	( )
Token or point system	( )	( )
Cost response system	( )	( )
Contracts	( )	( )
Physical exercise program	( )	( )
Cognitive-Behavioral techniques	( )	( )
Verbal reprimand	( )	( )

	Yes	No
Tension relief through humor	( )	( )
Corporal punishment	( )	( )
Time out	( )	( )
Overcorrection	( )	( )
Mediation essay	( )	( )
Removal to school office	( )	( )
Physical restraint	( )	( )

5) Did you appreciate the note pad?

( ) yes ( ) no

6) I will be including a note pad with the questionnaire during the actual data collection, is this an incentive to complete the form?

( ) yes ( ) no

Do you have suggestions for alternatives which would be comparable (in physical size and cost)? If so, please specify:

_____

_____

7) If you were participating in the actual study, would you have any objections to signing your name to the form?

( ) yes ( ) no

Please comment:_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS PHASE OF THE PROJECT, IT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!

APPENDIX H

PHASE II OBSERVATION FORM

PHASE II OBSERVATION FORM

Thank you for consenting to participate in this phase of the study on aggression in settings where emotionally handicapped students are served. Please record each incident of aggressive behavior as it occurs by placing a slash (/) in the appropriate row and column for the week of October 3 through 7, 1983. Then return the form in the enclosed postage-paid envelope to the study coordinator by October 14, 1983.

	MONDAY Oct. 3	TUESDAY Oct. 4	WEDNESDAY Oct. 5	THURSDAY Oct. 6	FRIDAY Oct. 7
EXTREME PHYSICAL AGGRESSION TOWARD OTHERS (attacking or attempting to attack another person with sufficient force to potentially inflict serious physical harm, hitting, choking, headlock, etc.)	(OEPA1)	(OEPA2)	(OEPA3)	(OEPA4)	(OEPA5)
PHYSICAL AGGRESSION TOWARD OTHERS (attacking or attempting to attack another person with sufficient force to potentially inflict pain, biting, scratching, hairpulling, etc.)	(OPA1)	(OPA2)	(OPA3)	(OPA4)	(OPA5)
PHYSICAL AGGRESSION TOWARD SELF (self-mutilation or battering; cutting, biting, head banging, etc.)	(OPAS1)	(OPAS2)	(OPAS3)	(OPASN)	(OPASS)
PHYSICAL AGGRESSION TOWARD INANIMATE OBJECTS (destruction of, or damage to any object)	(OPAOB1)	(OPAOB2)	(OPAOB3)	(OPAOB4)	(OPAOB5)
VERBAL AGGRESSION, not accompanied by any of the other four types of aggression (the use of verbal communication that is perceived by the observer as negative, derogatory, or very negativism. Verbiage resulting in anxiety or disruption of activity of the person hearing commenting in a whining, nasal, or falsetto voice and/or poking fun at or intentionally embarrassing another, failure to comply with a request to act in a given manner immediately, while threatening negative consequences for non-compliance, etc.)	(OVA1)	(OVA2)	(OVA3)	(OVA4)	(OVA5)

APPENDIX I

PHASE I PARTICIPANT COVER LETTER

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
University of Florida
Gainesville, Fla. 32611

Dear Colleague:

As part of a research project in special education at the University of Florida a study is being conducted to determine the nature and extent of aggressive behavior of students served in settings for the emotionally handicapped and to determine what are the current methods used in Florida public schools for decreasing and coping with aggressive student actions. The primary source of information is you and other teachers like yourself who work in settings serving emotionally handicapped (EH) and/or seriously emotionally disturbed (SED) students. The study will result in information which will assist planning of content of future teacher training at both preservice and inservice levels and direct future research in methods of coping with aggressive students. A more detailed description of the study is enclosed.

The purpose of this letter is to solicit your cooperation with this study. Dee Dee Wells, Consultant for the Emotionally Handicapped, Bureau for the Education of Exceptional Students, Division of Public Schools, Florida Department of Education has endorsed the study. Your local director of exceptional student programs has also cooperated with this project. Your cooperation with this study is crucial to the usefulness of the results.

We are aware that in some settings serving EH and/or SED students, aggressive behavior poses little problem. However, aggression is a characteristic of some EH/SED students and the validity of the study requires that teachers from all kinds of settings be involved.

Teachers of EH/SED students in your district have been selected for participation in both Phase I and Phase II of the study. Enclosed you will find an information sheet, briefly describing the study, a questionnaire, instructions for completing the questionnaire, and a postage-paid envelope for returning the completed form.

You are being requested to cooperate with this study by performing the following tasks:

(1) Complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed, postage-paid enveloped by September 19, 1983.

(2) Volunteer to participate in Phase II of the study by indicating the extent of your willingness to do so on the enclosed questionnaire.

(3) Participate in Phase II of the study by recording any incidence of aggressive behavior as defined on an observation form during a specified one week time period.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

We believe strongly in the relevance and importance of this study. Your participation is a crucial factor to the validity of the project and your cooperation is sincerely sought. It is important that you understand, however, that your cooperation is voluntary in both Phase I and Phase II and that you have the right not to participate in either or both phases. Every step possible to insure that the data collection be conducted with little or no disruption to the normal teaching routine has been taken. The success of the study is largely dependent upon your participation in this project. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us at (904) 392-0755, 622-0701 (Suncom), or through SPECIALNET User Name UF.SE.

We very much appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Kathy L. Ruhl
Study Coordinator

Bob Algozzine, Ph.D.
Professor of Special Education

KLR/lrc

Enclosure

APPENDIX J

PHASE I AND PHASE II
GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS

PHASE I AND PHASE II
GENERAL GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS

The Nature and Extent of Aggression in Settings
Serving Emotionally Handicapped Students

Please try to complete the questionnaire as soon as possible and return it to the researcher in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by September 19, 1983.

The results of this questionnaire will be combined with those of other questionnaires. No names of individuals, schools, or districts will be used in any reports.

General Instructions for Questionnaire

Complete the questionnaire keeping in mind that you are responding in terms of *all* your experience as a teacher of emotionally handicapped students (not just the current school year).

IF your experience includes teaching varying exceptionalities classes which served emotionally handicapped students, your responses should include *all* incidents of aggression in those settings even though the aggression may have been exhibited by students not identified as emotionally handicapped.

Indicate your response to each question by placing an "X" in the appropriate space.

The numbers and letters shown in parentheses beside answer categories should be ignored; they are included only to assist the processing of your answers.

Information on Phase II

Your participation in Phase II would involve the maintenance of a frequency count of the five types of aggressive behaviors specified in the questionnaire for one week.

A small sample of teachers participating in Phase II and consenting to have a member of the field staff also record aggressive behaviors of their students will be visited by a field staff member.

A sample of the observation form is enclosed in this packet.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right not to participate in either or both phases. However, we would like to stress that your participation is important to the validity and success of the study and we encourage your full cooperation.

APPENDIX K

PHASE I RAFFLE TICKET

RETURN THIS **TICKET** WITH YOUR **COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE** BY SEPTEMBER 19, 1983 AND YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO **WIN** A

MINI-PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY
(VALUED AT OVER $100.00)

IF YOU WIN, FOUR OF THE BOOKS YOU'LL GET ARE:

*PROBLEM BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT EDUCATOR'S RESOURCE SERVICE (1982-83) Edited by Bob Algozzine
An $80.00 value, contains *practical* information on: emotional problem improvement, working with secondary students, controlling physical violence in the classroom, social problem improvement, and more.

*EDUCATING EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN (4th Edition) (1983) By Kirk and Gallagher
A $20.00 value, contains up-to-date information and a refreshing focus on the exceptional child as a *learner*.

*THE NEW GAMES BOOK (1976) Edited by Andrew Fluegelman
*MORE NEW GAMES (1981) By Andrew Fluegelman
A combined value of $16.00; wonderful, co*operative* activities for all ages — these do work well with *EH kids!*

*AND MORE

TO ENTER
1) Check the name and address on the raffle ticket
2) If incomplete or incorrect put your name and address on the raffle ticket
3) Return your ticket with your completed questionnaire by September 19, 1983.

NOTE: You do not have to *volunteer* to participate in *Phase 2* of the study to enter the drawing.

DRAWING will be held October 7, 1983 and the winner will be notified by mail. The Mini-Library will be shipped to the address on the winning ticket via United Parcel Services or the U.S. Postal Service.

ONE CHANCE ON A MINI—PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY
FOR: .....
Your Name
.....
Address
.....
City, State & Zip

APPENDIX L

PHASE I FOLLOW UP LETTER

UF COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
University of Florida
Gainesville, Fla. 32611

September 22, 1983

Dear Colleague:

I am writing to urge you to reconsider participating in Phase I of the study into aggression being conducted through the Department of Special Education at the University of Florida.

As you may recall, the study is being conducted to provide information on the nature and extent of aggression as it occurs in settings serving emotionally handicapped students. The results of the study should be of long range benefit to students and teachers. The study has been endorsed by Dede Wells, consultant for the Emotionally Handicapped, Bureau of Exceptional Students, Division of Public Schools, Florida Department of Education.

The need for accurate, complete information is critical and whether or not you have personally encountered problems with aggression, you can help by providing the needed information. Since we are going to considerable effort to assure that the data are representative of school districts in Florida, it is important that we hear from a representative sample of teachers, including those for whom the problem is minor as well as those for whom it is of greater concern.

I am enclosing another copy of the questionnaire which I hope you will complete and return in the enclosed postage paid envelope. If you have already completed the questionnaire and returned it to us, please accept our appreciation for your cooperation as we conduct this research.

Sincerely,

Kathy L. Ruhl
Study Coordinator

Bob Algozzine
Bob Algozzine, Ph.D.
Professor of Special Education

KLR/lrc

Enclosure

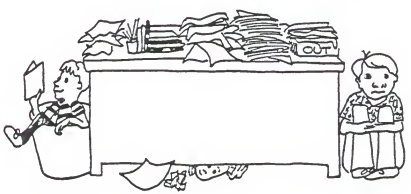
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

APPENDIX M

PHASE I FOLLOW UP NOTE

We know you have TONS of paper on your desk...

(and LOTS of IMPORTANT things to do)



... however, we have not yet received your **completed questionnaire** on aggression and it is Desperately

NEEDED.

PLEASE RESPOND

(the idea for this study originated with a teacher of E.H. students and we believe the results will improve classroom life for others like you)

P.S. You CAN <u>STILL</u> ENTER the RAFFLE.

Just return the green ticket with your completed questionnaire. We're sure you'll find the mini-library very useful. Please participate.

APPENDIX N

PHASE II NOTE OF APPRECIATION--
FRONT AND BACK

This word describes your behavior:

pro•fes•sion•al ***adj.*** ***1.*** of, engaged in, or worthy of the high standards of, a profession.

I've always known teachers of EH students are WONDERFUL but you have really proved my point by volunteering to participate in the observation phase of this study.

The information you provide is very important and I am anxiously awaiting the return of your completed form.

Thank you very much,

SOME LAST MINUTE TIPS:

COUNT ONLY INCIDENTS - not every hit or word
EG: A fight breaks out during which approximately 14 blows are exchanged, hair pulled, and words exchanged.

OR

A student kicks another student and it ends there.

Each of these incidents should be recorded with a single slash mark for extreme physical aggression toward others under the appropriate day of the week.

IF YOU MISS A DAY - just indicate it on the form so we'll know that data was not collected that day rather than assuming there were no incidents. Some information is better than no information.

SOMEONE SOMEWHERE

WILL BENEFIT FROM YOUR PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE

APPENDIX O

PHASE II POSTCARD--
FRONT AND BACK

K.L. Ruhl
G-315 Norman Hall
Spec. Ed., U. of F.
Gainesville, FL 32606

IF you have not yet mailed your observation data for the study on aggression PLEASE do so TODAY. We need it, even if no incidents of aggression occurred last week.

Thank you,

Kathy

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born August 8, 1949, in Louisville, Kathy Ruhl spent her first twenty-eight years in Kentucky. She received her B.A. in elementary education from the University of Kentucky in 1972 and earned a M.Ed. in special education of the emotionally disturbed in 1973 at the University of Louisville. Ms. Ruhl taught public school classes for the behavior disordered at both elementary and junior high levels over a period of five years. During this time she was one of a small group of teachers who organized a special school for behavior disordered children and became involved with staff training of new teachers and aides for that facility.

Kathy moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1977 where she spent four years as a liaison teacher to teachers of emotional/behavioral adjustment classrooms at the secondary level. It was during this period that her interest in teacher training expanded and she began to perform independent professional consultation on educating emotionally handicapped children and youth. Also while in North Carolina, Ms. Ruhl sought and received training in non-offensive methods of physical intervention. Since that time she has conducted numerous workshops on such strategies and this area remains one of her continued interests.

In 1981 Ms. Ruhl, her husband, Charlie Hughes, and daughter, Hilary, moved to Gainesville, Florida. It was the intention of Ms. Ruhl and Mr. Hughes to obtain Ph.D.'s in special education from the University of Florida. With completion of her dissertation Ms. Ruhl has attained that goal. Teacher training and consultation, writing and research are Ms. Ruhl's current professional interests.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Robert F. Algozzine, Chairman
Professor of Special Education

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Margaret L. Fong
Assistant Professor of Counselor Education

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Catherine Morsink
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Rex E. Schmid
Associate Professor of Special Education

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of Special Education in the College of Education and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December, 1983

Dean for Graduate Studies and Research